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MEG McINTYRE'S RAFFLE

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MEG McINTYRE'S RAFFLE AND OTHER STORIES

MEG McINTYRE'S RAFFLE

And Other Stories

By

ALVAN F. SANBORN

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BOSTON
COPELAND AND DAY
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TO "AL"

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MEG McINTYRE'S RAFFLE

MEG McINTYRE was a round, rosy, happy-natured, young Irish widow. Nothing could keep Meg McIntyre sad for long. If anything could have done it, the dreadful panic winter of 1894 would. It was very hard on Meg and her brood of three small children, "all that's spared o' seven, an' two of 'em twins." They could feed easily enough from the head of a barrel, so the table went to the pawnshop first. It was quickly followed by the lounge, the bedsteads, most of the chairs, Meg's and the children's Sunday clothes, the red plush album, and even the colored lithograph of the Pope. There the pawning had to stop. Meg could not spare the stove, nor the cooking-dishes, nor the bedding, and these were the only important articles left, except a valuable eight-day clock.

The clock! there was the rub. That was not indispensable, but it was the gift of a dying mother, and was brought over from

Cork, ten years before, when Meg and Tim McIntyre came to this country a hopeful young married pair. The clock was Meg McIntyre's family plate and jewels. It was her *cachet* of respectability. It linked her to her ancestry. Meg's maiden name was O'Riley, and the O'Rileys, as everybody knows, have always carried their heads very high in Cork.

She must part with the clock. That was certain. She had no work, she could find no work, she could not even hope for work — times were so bad. She must humble her pride to the extent of letting the clock go, but not to the pawnshop. Never! She would "put it up at a raffle." Raffling would be both better form and better business than pawning. Her neighbors had often envied her her fine clock, and now that she was "down in her luck" they should have a "thry fer it." If it was to pass through her doors at all, it must go openly and honorably. More than that, it must be borne away in triumph, and must be throned on a family mantel as it always had been, not sneaked under a ragged shawl and dumped in a pawnshop to be elbowed by the promiscuous company there.

For a week or more, Meg put her whole soul into the details of the coming ceremo-

nial. Mrs. Flanagan, her bosom friend and tenant of the floor above her, was known to "stand in" with Officer Buckley. She volunteered to "fix the perlice;" also to give Meg the use of her kitchen if she needed it. Other neighbors were kind; they offered chairs and lamps. Mike Geoghegan, the keeper of the corner groggery, guaranteed plenty of beer. Sandy McGregor, the Scotch fiddler, agreed to "fiddle the nicht" for three dollars. Both men were willing to trust to the proceeds of the raffle for their pay. Tickets were printed, though how the printer was induced to give credit has never been revealed. He, too, may have been a neighbor and friend. The tickets were of bright yellow cardboard, and read:

A GRAND RAFFLE

FOR AN

EIGHT-DAY CLOCK,

TO BE HELD AT

39 FEEGAN'S ALLEY,

Saturday Evening, February 7, 1894.

TICKETS:

Gents, 50 cents. Ladies, 25 cents.

Dancing, 8 till 2. MRS. McINTYRE.

The earliest arrivals were three men, more or less mellow on their week's wages. They had gone from their work to Geoghegan's bar-room, where the free lunch was so ample that it was not necessary for them to go home to supper. They were Jerry Sullivan, lean, witty, and garrulous, in or out of his cups; Patsy Moran, an Irish-American, educated in the public schools, who piqued himself on his Americanism and his book-learning; and Buck Rafferty, a heavy, broken-nosed, ugly-looking bruiser, with a heart like a little child's, and never more like than when its action was stimulated by drink. It was about half-past seven when these three appeared. They straightway demanded beer with a bravado that would have done credit to the three musketeers. Mrs. McIntyre did not propose serving beer until later in the evening, but she filled up a glass apiece, as the easiest way to keep them within bounds, forbidding them to ask for more as she did so.

Sandy, the fiddler, came next; then Shamus O'Brien and Barney O'Toole, two bright-eyed, fresh-skinned, straight-limbed, young immigrants who were usually seen together. They were sober. Barney was madly in love with Mrs. McIntyre. Feegan's Alley gossip said that she had already jilted him. But Feegan's Alley gossip is as apt to come wide of

the mark as the gossip of other localities. The truth was, that Barney, being diffident to the last degree where women were concerned, had not plucked up the courage to declare himself.

These were all the arrivals for half an hour, and during that time the three mellow men and the three sober men had it all to themselves. They sang and danced and bandied and badgered each other (between the puffs of their pipes) as only Irishmen can without coming to blows.

Jerry told a comical story of the way the feud between the Catholics and Protestants was ended in the English army, holding out bravely against the running fire of facetious interruptions to which he was subjected.

Big Buck dropped his pipe on the floor, in an ineffectual attempt to light it, and then dropped himself there, flat on his stomach, in an ineffectual attempt to pick up the pipe. That made the hysterical, flat-nosed brute fall a-weeping. Shamus ran to lift him, in mock terror lest his nose "get hurted out o' shape." When he had located the overgrown baby in a chair, he ostentatiously dried his tears with a dirty handkerchief. Then he lighted his pipe for him, by way of consolation, and told him what a beautiful fellow he was, cajoling him as one would cajole a dog. Buck

responded with caresses, dog-fashion. Afterwards he took to chattering of the superiority of Irish songs to Scotch songs and all other songs. He attempted to illustrate, but these attempts rather weakened than strengthened his assertions.

Patsy, the learned, propounded an arithmetical puzzle which Jerry's clever quizzing proved Patsy himself could not answer. Not the least disconcerted by this futile display, Patsy made a bold excursion into the field of history, where he could not so easily be exposed. "Why's this called America? You don't know?" he cried. "You're a pack of ignorant fools not to know why your own country's name is. Well, now, just let me tell you. Englishmen did that; they want everything. Americus he was an Englishman. What did he do to America? Nothing. He wrote a big bookful of lies about it just like Englishmen are always doing. But Americus he was an Englishman, and the English wouldn't give no credit to no one else. Columbus he was the right chap. But he warn't no Englishman, so he might just as well never lived. This country had no call to be named America. It ought to been called Hail Columbia!" Patsy's patriotic oratory was not in vain. This time the listeners were properly impressed.

At eight, the other guests began to arrive, and by 8.30 the men, women, and children in Mrs. McIntyre's ten-by-ten kitchen were like sardines in a box — like in the closeness of the layers, not otherwise, for they creaked and chattered like a flock of crow blackbirds. Owing to this lack of space, the raffling was done upstairs in Mrs. Flanagan's kitchen, whither the guests went in detachments, to "make their thrys." The eight-day clock was craftily placed on the kitchen table to incite covetousness, and there were a dice-box and three dice beside it. Each person was allowed three shakes on the strength of his admission-ticket. Jem Murphy, the neighborhood junk-dealer, kept tally, with a good-natured display of authority and wit. Nearly every shake extracted a wink and an epigram from Jem. The winks were all alike, but the epigrams were all different — fair proof that Jem's wit is more versatile than his eyelids.

Extra shakes were to be had at ten cents each. Most of the guests were satisfied with one round, but Barney O'Toole and Mike Geoghegan got into a heated contest which involved many dimes — Mike, because he coveted the clock for his saloon, Barney, for a tenderer reason. In this instance love prevailed over covetousness, and Barney won.

Sandy, the fiddler, was persuaded to stop and play a few tunes when he came upstairs for his round at the dice-box, and Shamus' legs were so quickly possessed by Sandy's music that he shot into the middle of the floor, dice-box in hand, after his first shake. He had to be forced back to the table to finish his round. Others felt their feet impelled to quick stepping, among them Barney and Katie McIntyre, Meg's eldest, a barefoot, frowzle-headed, half-clad, seven-year-old. Barney circled the room several times with Katie on his shoulder while she screamed with delight. Then the two joined hands and danced till Barney admitted himself "fagged." Katie's legs might have been made of steel and worked by electric power for all the weariness they showed. The agile, little creature danced down four or five men in succession without the slightest variation in the musical patter of her tiny feet, and then spun off by herself as irresponsible and uncanny as "Little Pearl, the Elf-Child" of Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter." Finally, clumsy Buck claimed Katie for a partner. Buck still had "an elegant skate on 'im," as Jerry put it, and found the greatest difficulty in bringing his movements into any sort of harmony with Katie's or the music. He had not staggered round the room more than twice when

he fell backwards with a mighty crash on an open flour bucket in an open closet. Katie cleverly slipped her hold with a ringing peal of saucy, impish laughter, and switched on, glad to be rid of so impossible a partner. Buck's fierce exertions to find his feet again and shake the flour from his clothes were loudly cheered.

The real frolic of the evening came, however, when, the raffling over, the fiddler and the people returned to the lower kitchen. Then and there was set up a beer keg of which Mrs. McIntyre had entire supervision. Meg ambled about with a foaming pitcher and a couple of mugs, lavishing smiles and bows and rallying words on every side, pausing only to draw the beer or to toss off a mug herself when her health was proposed by a chevalier.

It was a mark of Meg's fine tactfulness that the men who were already fuddled were almost ignored in this distribution. Meg didn't propose to have her raffle disgraced by "scrapping," not if anything she could do would prevent. In a word, she showed herself an ideal entertainer — generous and judicious. A rather corpulent Hebe to rather grotesque divinities, perhaps; nevertheless, the festival was in all respects Olympian.

Barney eyed her dotingly. "Shure an' I've

got the ould gurrl's clock, that's wan point in me favor. I'll court her the night, I'll be damned ef I don't!" he muttered to himself as he drained a mug to Meg McIntyre's prosperity.

At first, the dancing was confined to polkas, waltzes, and quadrilles, Patsy calling out for the last named. The men were more often amiss than not in the quadrille figures, their waltz steps were like the waddle of a hippopotamus, and their polka steps as crazy and futile as the jumpings of a just-beheaded rooster. But as the fiddle and the dancers both became exhilarated, the desire for fun got the better of the desire for fashion, and the rout waxed fast and furious. Conventional dances were superseded by good old Irish breakdowns. The canter of the fiddle-bow had much ado to keep ahead of the dancers' frenzied stampings. There were cat-calls and snatches of song; embracings, whirlings, smackings, and pantings; dust, steam, red faces, gleaming eyes. As a display of animal spirits it was superb.

In the midst of one of the wildest swirls, Shamus and his partner, Bridget Rafferty, lost their balance and landed on the stove, the one in a saucepan of boiled tomato, the other in a kettle of beef stew. Fortunately

the stove was not hot, and there was no harm done except to raiment and terpsichorean pride.

The revelry did not wane until the lamps began to pale before the daylight. Then the result of the raffle was formally announced by Jem, the tally-keeper. "Ladies and gentlemen," shouted Jem, with a flourish, "the clock goes to Barney O'Toole, with a fine record of forty-eight out of a possible fifty-four. Barney needs it. He's got no woman to wake him up o' mornin's. Barney won't be sleepin' over mornin's no more. Don't ye forget to wind it, Barney. Here's to your good health an' all your family!"

Barney's gallantry at this juncture was prompt and convincing. "I'll have no use fer fergittin'," he said. "It's mesilf was a shakin' fer Mrs. McIntyre," with a melting look in her direction. "It's her'll kape the clock."

"Thank ye, Barney; shure an' Oi will that," came Meg's lusty reply; "an' God bless ye, me bye, fer yer kind heart!"

Meg further displayed her gratitude by asking Barney to dance with her the final breakdown. Up to that time she had refused all invitations to dance, on the plea of being "dead tired," as indeed she must have been. But her joy over the restoration of the dear clock drove all weariness from her heart and

limbs as she swung in Barney's arms. Meg and her partner needed all of the floor-space to vent their feelings on, and after a little they had it; for the rest of the couples, feeling themselves *de trop*, drew off to watch, flattening themselves (to the end of making space) against the wall and the big wood-box. The giddy pair advanced, retreated, embraced, whirled, and stamped like mad. Bashful Barney's blood was up at last, and there was a glow in his eyes that made Meg drop hers like a girl.

"Is it fer kapes I hould ye, Meg, me darlint?" he crooned as they whirled in the last measure with their hot faces almost touching. "Faith an' it is, Barney, me swateheart," was crooned back to him. "Ye won me clock straight an' fair on the shake. Do ye think I'd be afther a-takin' it back ef I hadn't been minded ter take ye along wid it? Ye pore innicint!"

Just then the music ceased. Barney gave Meg a sounding smack on the mouth. "To claim ye before the company, Meg," he explained, and Meg demurred not.

Of course there were cheerings and congratulations and healths. When these were over and all the guests were gone, Meg and Barney climbed Mrs. Flanagan's stairs together for the clock. They returned it to the one clean

spot on Meg's dusty mantel. Then they counted the gate-money—$20, $10 clear.

"Well, Meg, me swate gurrl," said Barney, "ye've had a surpassin' foine frolic, an' ye've got the beautiful clock an' tin dollars profits, an' mesilf. Count mesilf in with the profits, Meg."

They pledged each other in the dregs of the beer and swore eternal fidelity under the clock.

Meg McIntyre's troubles were over.

MRS. MOLLOY'S REVENGE

BRIDGET MOLLOY is hardly a complex person — quite the reverse. Yet she has a rare power of detaching herself from herself, at will, which enables her to observe and converse with herself just as if she were another person. On the occasions when she does this, she is markedly deferential, invariably referring to herself as Mrs. Molloy.

In just the degree that her experiences take on for herself vividness and dramatic interest, through this power of self-detachment, do her narratives of them take on obscurity for her hearers. For instance, the last time Bridget partook of the communion she abjured drink. This was her version of the event:

"'Is they aught ye want to guv over, Mrs. Molloy?' sez I to meself, whin I wint into the church. 'How abhout the dhrink, Mrs. Molloy? Wull ye guv that over?'

"'No, I'm thinkin' I wull not, not to-day,' sez I, 'seein' they's goin' to wake Hourihan's

wife the noight, an' the ould man's got in a keg av beer for the wakin' av her. Faith an' 'twud be a mortial sin, Mrs. Molloy, not to help out wid the wakin'.'

"So I tuk me sate an' dishindid on me two knees; an' jest thin who shud come an' shquat down forninst me but me nex' door neighbor these tin years — Mrs. Maguire.

"'Gud morrnin', Mrs. Maguire,' sez I, in a whusper.

"'Gud morrnin', Mrs. Molloy,' sez she.

"'Is they aught sinfu' ye're goin' to lave aff the dhay, Mrs. Maguire?' sez I.

"'Shure, an' I'm goin' to lave aff the dhrink,' sez she, — 'for wan month,' sez she.

"'The Divil ye ain't,' sez I.

"'The Divil I am,' sez she.

"'Thin ye'd betther lave aff the dhrink yourself, Mrs. Molloy,' sez I to meself.

"'Ef that's thrue, I'll be afther lavin' aff the dhrink wid yez,' sez I to her; an' that blissid minut the praist passed the wafers. It tuk me all av a suddint, an' before iver I guv a thought to ould man Hourihan's beer an' the wakin' I'd thaken me vow on the wafer to lave aff the dhrink for wan month.

"An' that's how I didun't go to the Hourihan wakin'; an' that's how I'm not dhrinkin' no more. Ut's a dhry toime, an' a terruble thurrst I have in me t'roat, an' they's two

wakes an' a raffle the week; but sez I to meself, for me strengthenin':

"'Ye may be a sinfu' woman, Mrs. Molloy, but ye're not that bhad to fargit your vow on the wafer; ye've not come to that, Mrs. Molloy, an' the howly saints aidin' ye, ye niver wull.'"

In confessional, Father Foley, though quite used to Bridget Molloy's eccentricity, is often sadly at a loss as to the exact nature of the sin she has been guilty of. He is content, therefore, to exact a light penance, preferring — kind-hearted old man that he is — to err on the side of clemency, if error must be.

Mrs. Molloy was recently fined ten dollars by the court for assault and battery on Mrs. Mulligan. Mrs. Molloy will gladly explain to you how so reputable a woman as herself came to be in so equivocal a position. If you fail to follow her explanation, it will prove you deficient in her own fine dramatic instinct, and that will be your fault, not hers.

Listen to Mrs. Molloy:

"Me an' Mrs. Maguire was a-settin' on me door-shtep av a Sunday, wan week gone, a discoorsin' plisint av wan thing an' anither.

"'Ut's yourself has the foine husband, Mrs. Maguire,' sez I; an' I thinks to meself, 'Ye wudn't take up wid no dhrunken hoodlum av

a man, loike your Tim, Mrs. Molloy, av ye had the choosin' av 'im again. Ye'd orter had more sinse, Mrs. Molloy, though ye was naught but a silly gurrl thin, than to thake up wid a man for loife jest along av the currl av his whuskers.'

"'Ye're roight there, Mrs. Molloy,' rishpondid Mrs. Maguire; 'me Mike is a oncommin' foine spicimin av a man, but ut's your own five swate chuldern I'm afther a-grudgin' ye, me that ain't got wan, an' twinty year married. Was they iver as pretty a bloomin' gurrl to rest your oi on iver stud in two shtockin's as your Annie, Mrs. Molloy? An' a rale help to yez in the house, is she not that? By the bye, they's those as are bitther envious av ye bekaze av her, an' they shpake ill av her to make your bhlood bhoil. Did iver I till ye the remhark Mrs. Mulligan passed on your Annie wan dhay, she that shud hould her tongue, av anybody shud, the hull strate knowin' her Katie for worse'n no daughter at all.'

"'Fwhat did she say, Mrs. Maguire? Fwhat did she say? Till me quhick,' I sez, a-rhisin' up.

"'Now, Mrs. Molloy,' I remharks to meself, 'av that dishrepitable Mulligan woman has set her tongue waggin', an' has passed insultin' remharks on your daughter, ye've got hot

worruk to do before noight, Mrs. Molloy, an' don't ye decave yourself into fancyin' ye hain't.'

"'Fwhat did she say, Mrs. Molloy?' sez Mrs. Maguire; 'ye moight betther be ashkin' fwhat *didun't* she say? She sez, — I giv ye her very worruds, — " Mrs. Molloy's Annie ain't no better'n she shud be, wid all her pink chakes an' her scrumpshus airs; " an' she sez more, fwhat I won't repate above a whusper.' An' thin Mrs. Maguire whuspered me in me ear fwhat you'd 'ave tistified she done roight to whusper, av you'd 'ave heard ut, a mess av nasty lies that wud make me ould faace blush to mintion, even to meself. My Gawd, the sin av her! 'An' to think, Mrs. Molloy, ut was shpoke av your own bhone an' bhlood!'

"'Thank yez, Mrs. Maguire! Thank yez tin thousand toimes,' sez I. 'Ut's this blissid minut ye've done the act av a rale frind to me an' moine. Thank yez, thank yez, Mrs. Maguire!'

"Thin I sez to meself, slow an' sollum, to make shure I was dooly considerin', for me head was schwimmin' an' whurrlin' loike me Andy's peg-top wid rage: 'Av ye're half av a woman, Mrs. Molloy, an' not a fat loomp av sour dough, ye'll make Mrs. Mulligan schrape the floor wid the shkin av her knees,

for beggin' av your pardin, and ye'll mhake her swally her own nasty worruds, whoile they're shtill shlimy wid the shpittle av her, ye wull, Mrs. Molloy, ye wull, by Gawd! An' the howly Virgin be prisint to aid ye!'

"Thin I shtarted for the Mulligan tinimint, wid bhlood in me oi, niver guvin' a t'ought to me Sunday rhaimunt. The tinimint was three floights up. I was that impatient, ut seemed tin moiles, an' all the way I was muttherin' to meself, 'Make the ould Mulligan she-cat thake back thim worruds, dishgracin' your family, Mrs. Molloy! Make her thake thim back to your faace, or ye're no better'n a she-cat yourself!'

"Jimmy Mulligan — the Divil thake his mealy little phiz for bein on the lhandin' — seen me comin' a-muttherin' his mither's name, an' the spalpeen rin bawlin' in to her, 'Molloy's ould woman's comin' to kill ye, mither, she's coming to kill ye! I seen her sayin' ut!'

"By that same thoken the Mulligan door was locked whin I got to't, spacheliss, for the wind av me bein' all gone wid rinnin' up the shteep shtairs in me eagerness; an' me wind, ye ondershtand, is bad batthered sence I tuk to me bed wid the pleurisy lasht shpring. Notwithshtandin' that, I fell apoundin' the door wid me two fishts, an',

whin I got a grup on me wind, I scramed wid all me moight: 'Opin that door, ye ould she-divil, orr I'll smash ut into smithereens an' your dhirty rhid head wid ut, ye swill-mouthed sow! Opin that door, I commhand ye, av ye set the worrth av a shpecked pertaty on your shameless loife!'

"Thin Mrs. Mulligan, opinin' she was safe wid the door betune us, set up a hidjis, loony, cackle av a larf, an' she sarsed me an' currsed me an' me Annie wid more mucky, shamefu' names than iver I seen a female woman shpit out av her mouth before or sence. Ye comprihind her shtyle, so I needun't demane meself sayin' em over to ye. Or-r-r-r! but ut mhade me woild to hear her rin on, an' me not able to get me hands to her!

"'Wull ye stan' that, Mrs. Molloy?' sez I to meself. 'Wull ye stan' that, now? Wull ye thake the lip loike that from anny man, woman, or baste thing? Fwhat are ye made av, Mrs. Molloy? Soap grease? Here's your chanst, Mrs. Molloy! Ye was wanst a shlim, swate filly av a gurrl, av no vally at all, at all, but jest to ghaze on. Now ye're a fat, ugly ould woman; but ye've got poun's, Mrs. Molloy, an' ut's poun's ye're afther nadin' now for your prisint purrpose. T'row your fat ould karkis agin that door, as

ye reghard the honor av yourself an' your family; an' ef your fat ould karkis ain't ekal to shmashin' ut to shplinters, let ut sizzle in hell for iver an' iver, av so be the Divil himself don't schorn ut to guv ut hell-room!'

"Wid thim momenthous worruds on me lhips, I pulled meself thegither an' trun me hull weight at the door. By me sowl, ut guv way a gud bit an' cracked in twinty places, an' so did me ould bhones, I'm thinkin', an' me insoides; but I niver shtopped a minut for that.

"'Or-r-r-ra, will done! Kape ut up, Mrs. Molloy! Your ould karkis ain't no rottin' corp' yit! Let her have ut again, Mrs. Molloy, let her have ut again!'

"Wid a prhayer to the saint av me christ'nin' on me bhurrstin' lips, I let her have ut again; an', all to wanst, I niver known how, I found meself wid me two eager fishts clinched in Mrs. Mulligan's hell-rhid shnakes av hair, an' she, yellin' bhloody murdher worse nor a loony in a shtrait jackut, wid her dhirty claws in me own hair,—bad luck to me haste!—an' the iligant rhoses av me Sunday bonnut all mashed to pink poolp, as I cud feel plain widout seein' av ut. But me poun's was me salvashin. For, bein' the heavier av the two by a long soight, I dhragged her me way, aisy, where I wulled, an' vintid

me rhage bangin' her agin the shtove an' the thable an' the four walls av the room.

"Shure, I'd have thired her out complately, afther a whoile, an' got me two fishts buried in the pit av her stomick, barrin' the fac' that all av a suddint her ould man' rin thearin' in, an' grupped his arrums' roun' me waisht, wid the grup av a bull-dog's jaws, an' thried to dhrag me aff av her. That, ye percave, made the same as two pullin' at Mrs. Mulligan's hair insthid av wan, an' wan av the two a man. So I sez to meself, 'Niver ye moind, Mrs. Molloy, your guts is good, they can shtand ut. Your big bhody ain't wake an' soft — ut's gud for the shquazin'; an' av the shtoopid ould fool av a husband pulls harrd enough, ye'll have all his woman's rhid hairs in the hands av ye, wid the rhoots an' the dhirt shtickin' to 'm trun in.'

"Jest thin, me ould man, Tim, dhrunk as a pig, — as he gin'rally is, for that matther, the Divil thake him! — shtaggered in, an' grupped Mrs. Mulligan 'roun' her waisht an thried to pull her aff from me, an' that made me feel loike all me teeth was bein' exshtractud t'rough the top av me head, — the ould dhrunken baste!

"'Oh, Mrs. Molloy!' sez I, 'fwhativer the Divil did ye marry him for, Mrs. Molloy?'

"Faith, an' I'm thinkin' the tip av me head

'ud have gone up t'rough the roof, burrnin' uts way wid the fire av ut, ut was that hot, but for me good frind, Mrs. Maguire, — the Virgin reward her for her exhibishun av gud sinse, fwhat she's got more av in her little finger than tin husbands, dhrunk or sober, 'ave got in their heads! She, seein' me agony, an' the tears sthreamin' down me faace to mhake the floor shlipp'ry, got a grup on me hair, pullin' me way, betune me head an' that Mulligan woman's claws; and that aised me.

"'Oh, Agnes Maguire, ye're a rale jool,' thinks I to meself, 'an' ef iver I gits out av this blandhanderin' mess, ither than a mootilated corp', I'll guv ye the thanks ye desarve!'

"Will, the foive av us wint 'roun' an' roun' that room, — av we wint wanst we wint twinty toimes, — an' thin out av the door, an' down the shtairs, the hull three floights, rollin', bumpin', shlidin', flound'rin', an' all a-yellin' an' a-shwearin' past belief, no wan av us bein' able to shtop, bein' as we was thied thegither loike a bunch av muck-worms. An' av ye'd know fwhat that dishint filt loike, jest thry thumblin' down three floights av shtairs yourself.

"The hull strate was forgathered at the bhottom av the shtairs, an' three cops, wid the

patrol — Jimmy Mulligan must have rin out wid the alarrum; an' thim cops, not shtoppin' to unthie us bekaze av the crowd, trun the shquirmin', scramin' loomp av us into the patrol an' dhruv loike mad for the station.

"An' thin — wull ye belave the onrighteousness av the law? — they lave us all go but meself, an' fined meself tin dhollars for assault an' batthry an' dishtharbin' the pace, bekaze I begun ut (as av Mrs. Mulligan didun't begin ut wid waggin' her dhirty tongue), an' bekaze I bruk down the door, — whin I tuk me oath that last was by way av a accidint, me bein' big an' fat, an' fallin' agin ut, w'ich was rickuty, loike ivery blissid thing abhout the Mulligan tinimint, they bein' nothorious.

"Whin I hern the Jedge say 'tin dhollars,' me wind forsuk me, an' me legs quhaked, an' I seen meself gittin' whoite in me faace.

"'Ye're a dishgraced woman, Mrs. Molloy,' I sez to meself. 'Ye'll have to lie in jail the noight an' the manny noights. Ye've got no money to pay tin dhollars, nor for that matther, tin cints, an' no more has your pig av a husband.'

"But me frind Mrs. Maguire, divinin' me sorrow, come to me aid wid the money she's been hoarrdin' the six months for the new plush sofy she's aften tould me av confi-

dential; an' the Jedge guv me a reproof, an' let me go me way.

"An' that's all.

"But I sez to meself, whin I got to me house, an' me neighbors shtopped comin' in for the congratulatin' av me, an' I had toime to meself for contemplashun, 'Ye condhucted yourself wid outrajis haste, Mrs. Molloy, they's no manner av doubt abhout that. Av iver again ye have to punish a female woman, thake toime to rhemove your Sunday rhaimunt an' get your fishts into her eyes to wanst, widout shtoppin' to grup her by the hair av her.'

"That's the lisson I've tuk to meself from me bitther expayrience. But, by me sowl, av ut so happens that Mulligan woman iver opens her mouth again to say wan dishrespec'-ful worrud agin me or me Annie, I'll have the hoide av her on the shpot — I wull, by Gawd! — though I be thricked out that minut wid jools an' laces, an' I have to pull out her shnaky rhid hairs, sep'rit, wan by wan, to git the dhrop av her."

THE CLINGING LEAF

AS the dry leaves of the oak cling after the foliage is gone from the other trees of the forest, and as a solitary, dry oak-leaf sometimes outclings all its fellows, so did the Fairbanks cling to Bigelow Street long after all their original neighbors had been blown away by the winds of circumstance — and so did Philena Fairbank outcling the rest of the Fairbanks by many years.

Jonas Fairbank, the father of Philena, was born in a village of the Cape at the beginning of this century. His father, who kept the village grocery, was an honored, substantial citizen. Jonas worked in the store as soon as he was old enough to work anywhere, and at his father's death he succeeded to the business. He was then twenty-one. Two years later he married Abigail Purdy, the eldest daughter of the village doctor. With his marriage, ambition came to Jonas Fairbank. The profits of a village grocery were necessarily limited, even in those good days

of New England rum. Jonas decided to emigrate to Boston. He sold out the store and with the proceeds of the sale went into partnership with a city wholesaler. The new business so prospered that he was soon able to settle his family in a comfortable house, which he built himself on Bigelow Street.

Bigelow Street belonged to an eminently reputable quarter of the city. It had a double row of fine shade-trees and about a dozen trim, wooden houses, set in spacious green yards. There were no tenants; all the houses were occupied by their owners. There was a healthy neighborhood life, consisting of much the same hearty exchange of hospitalities as the Fairbanks had been accustomed to in the little Cape village.

In Bigelow Street five children were born to Jonas and Abigail Fairbank: Philena, Jonas, Abigail, Ezra, and Josiah. Jonas and Ezra died in boyhood. Josiah, who inherited something of his father's love of trade, went West to make his fortune. Whether he made it or marred it the family never knew, for he ceased to be heard from after a few years of fitful correspondence. Philena and Abigail grew to ripe womanhood at home. They did not marry. This was not because they were unattractive. They were both far from that, Philena, in particular, though a trifle

too petite perhaps, being almost a beauty. One may never pretend to fathom maidens' hearts; but whatever other reasons there may have been for their not marrying, it is safe to say that it was partly because of their extreme fondness for the parents and for each other, and partly because the changes in the Fairbank household were more than matched by the changes in Bigelow Street. For, by the time Philena was thirty and Abigail twenty-six, lazy, noisy, poverty-stricken Irish tenants had entirely displaced the original occupants of the original wooden houses. Several of the green yards were already buried under four-story brick tenements, and the rest were in a fair way to be. There was a hearty neighborhood life still; rather too hearty, perhaps. From this, at any rate, the Fairbanks held themselves scrupulously aloof. Encompassed closely by their fellow-men, this family were nevertheless as much isolated as a tree on a Western prairie.

They talked sometimes of following the example of their former neighbors in moving to more fashionable quarters. The talk never came to anything. The leaves continued to cling.

By and by one of the leaves dropped, and soon another: the father and mother were dead.

Two leaves were left clinging. Two respectable old maids in the centre of a notorious tenement district! It was pathetic, it was almost wrong, but neither knew it. Apart from their grieving for the death of the old folks, they were not unhappy.

They had a tiny income, — tiny because the father's business had not prospered during his latter years; they had the homestead and they had each other. They wanted no more.

So it was for five years. Then Abigail died.

The last leaf was clinging alone, but with a grip that was still firm. Little Philena Fairbank was good for a long time yet.

One spring, the city decided to widen and pave Bigelow Street, and to provide it with brick sidewalks. These changes would involve the loss of the double line of shade trees, eat up the front dooryards of the older houses, and bring their front doorsteps on to the sidewalks. Philena could do nothing to save the noble trees in whose shade she and her dead sister had played as children, and their downfall caused her many bitter tears; but she could and would prevent the indecency, as she considered it, of direct communication between her house and the street. As soon, therefore, as it was reasonably clear to her what the result of the improvements was to be, she had her front doorsteps taken

away and her front door boarded up. At the same time, she had a hole, to serve as a front door, cut in the north side of the house in its exact centre. This location of the door necessitated rehanging a portrait of her father which had hung in the same spot ever since Philena could remember. But the old-maidenly sentiment for symmetry was stronger than the dislike of change, and that was strong indeed.

Not content with all these precautions, she had her poor, decapitated side-yard — in which neither flowers nor grass would any more grow on account of the overshadowing tenements — fortified against the slightest intrusion of eye or foot by a high fence of matched boards and a padlocked gate. Furthermore, she closed all the street blinds. It was full twenty years before they were opened, and then it was not Philena Fairbank who opened them.

By some curious ironical twist of her New England conscience Philena kept the offending sidewalk as scrupulously clean as everything else about the place, though few persons ever detected her washing it down. That hateful ritual was stolidly gone through with while the rest of Bigelow Street was asleep.

From one cause and another, which may not be entered on here, — everybody knows

how rapidly the trust funds of unsophisticated widows and old maids can be made to dwindle, — the day came when Philena found herself without an income.

Renting her rooms was too monstrous to be thought of. She would rather burn her house to the ground than prostitute it so. Besides, lodgers meant a loss of privacy, and she would far rather die than submit to that. She did think a good deal of trying to find work, — she had been brought up to regard toil as honorable, — but she shrunk infinitely from asking for it.

So she mortgaged the place for just as much as it would carry. The money so raised kept her fifteen years or thereabouts, at the end of which time she had become a feeble, wrinkled old woman. Then one day, by a supreme exertion of will, she went in search of work as stealthily as if she were about to commit a crime. Somehow — she herself never knew quite how, it was all so hideous a nightmare — she got employment as finisher for a tailoring establishment. The pay was so meagre, her eyesight so poor, and her strength so slight that it was pitifully little she could earn. Still this little enabled her to make necessary repairs on the house, to pay the taxes and the mortgage interest, and to keep body and soul together, though

by a thread far slenderer than that she plied with her needle.

She might, it is true, have got family sewing which would have paid better, but there was the dread possibility of being questioned, patronized, even pitied. Provided work is well and punctually done, the foreman of a concern, as a rule, asks nothing and cares nothing, and this seemingly cruel indifference is to such as Philena a positive blessing.

It was at this time that some one (it has never come out who; perhaps it was a foreman more tender-hearted than his profession demands, from whom Philena had not concealed her identity as well as she fancied) conceived a suspicion of her destitution and reported her to the Associated Charities.

It so happened that the agent of Ward LIX. was on her vacation and Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, a volunteer worker, was performing her duties in her absence. Now Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone had been for so many years one of the most expert of Ward LIX.'s "friendly visitors" that she unconsciously employed the tactful methods of "friendly visiting" in doing the routine work of the agent, in which such finesse as she piques herself on is entirely superfluous.

As Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone had all the marks of a lady, the wondering Philena allowed her

to pass unchallenged through the padlocked gate and conducted her to a chair in the dark front room. She did not sit herself. She stood waiting for the mysterious visitor to explain her errand.

Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone thus began: "You must be very lonesome quite by yourself in this dismal old house, Miss Fairbank. I was speaking about it only the other day to some ladies, some friends of yours, by the way, and they said to me, 'Why don't you make a friendly call on Miss Fairbank? I am sure you will like her, and just as sure she will appreciate it.' That is why I am here, Miss Fairbank, and I see they were right: we shall like each other, and I may come often, may I not, and" —

But Philena interrupted, "Who are these ladies you call my friends, who are so much interested in my affairs? They cannot be friends of mine. I have no friends — not above-ground," she added grimly, "and I want none."

"Why, my dear Miss Fairbank, how mistaken you are! How can you talk so! I am afraid you are unwell," promptly replied Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, not in the least disconcerted. "'You have no friends'? My dear, you have many friends. Believe me, I myself and the ladies I speak of are your friends,

your good friends. We are so deeply interested in charity, you know! We try so hard to be real friends to the poor!"

"Charity! The poor!" gasped Philena, staggering back as if she had been struck full in the face. "Does — she — mean — that? Yes — yes — I understand — now," she murmured huskily. Then, recovering herself with a little, spiteful jerk of the head and a sudden stiffening of her frail body, she looked her visitor straight in the eye and said with a precision of utterance so hard and icy that it cut like steel: "You may mean well, Mrs. — you neglected, I believe, to give me your name — but you have made a strange blunder. I am not one of the poor. If I were I should not wish you for a friend. I wish no such friends. Now go, please!"

She was sublime — she, tiny, wrinkled, shrunken, unsophisticated Philena Fairbank! The great Janauschek with all her inches had never done better than that.

"I — I — I — I beg your pardon," fluttered the astounded Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, hurriedly rising. "Really, you — you know there must be some mistake. I — I — I was told you were very, very poor indeed, — that you needed food and fuel and — and — clothes perhaps, and that you were badly behind with — with your rent."

"'Rent'!!" fairly shrieked Philena, goaded to a veritable frenzy by this fresh insult. "'Rent'!! You — you *thing* you! Are you mad, or did you come here on purpose to insult me? Are you a fiend or a witch, or what are you? 'Rent'! This 'dismal old house' is *mine*, MINE, MINE, do you hear?" The floodgates of her pent-up wrath were down, and she advanced on the now retreating offender, clutching the air spasmodically with her uncanny, bird-claw hands. "Mine, I say! 'Twas my father's before me. Tell your women who pay rent for hired flats, your 'ladies,' that Philena Fairbank is no pauper and wants no paupers' friends. Tell them she lives on Bigelow Street because that is where her homestead is, and she don't intend to leave it till she leaves it in her coffin. Tell them she lives in the midst of the poor, but that she minds her own business and the poor mind theirs. Tell them they'd better learn to do as much. Tell them that for thirty odd years, now, Philena Fairbank has paid her taxes, and if ever she needs to go to the poorhouse, she'll go with her head up, as is her right, without any help from busy-bodies who enter people's houses without being invited and call themselves 'ladies' and 'friends of the poor.' Tell them — tell them — tell — Oh, in the

name of God, leave me, leave me in peace, leave me — tell" — Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone was half-way up Bigelow Street, and Philena was in a little, limp heap on the floor.

Philena had begged them to leave her in peace. She was left in peace. Even Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone's well-meaning audacity has its limits. Besides, Philena had completely disarmed suspicion. She was living in her own house and she was never advertised for taxes. She was almost respectable. Indeed, but for her unladylike display of temper, it is not certain that she would not have been honored with an invitation to join the charmed circle of "friendly visitors" in Ward LIX.

For several years after Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone's memorable visit, Philena continued to pay interest and taxes with her scrupulous punctuality. An interest day arrived, however, when the mortgagee came in vain to the padlocked gate. No one answered his knock. Three days in succession he came with the same result. Then, growing alarmed, he summoned the police to enter the house.

They found her dead in her chair, with the exact amount due in her lap. She had died in the very act of counting the money, and the ghost of a satisfied smile still lingered on her face.

"Insufficient nutrition," the medical examiner said, and that means starvation.

There was not a morsel of food in the house, and very little else except the portrait of her father, a few of her sister Abigail's trinkets, and a handful of pawnbroker's checks. Everything had gone to the pawnshop for the interest.

Happy Philena! who had in no iota come short of the ideal she had set for herself, and so had had real success in life; for there is no other success but that. Death itself had been kind, in that it had come to her at the instant of her triumph — the very last triumph she could possibly have had.

Give her no tears. She needs none, she would have wished none. Rather spare them — tears are precious — for those who, for messes of pottage, sell their birthrights.

Every blind is now open on the street end of the Fairbank homestead. It has been made over into a tenement; it will soon be a rookery.

The last clinging leaf is gone.

A CELEBRATED CASE

THE Ward LIX. Conference of the Boston Associated Charities was in session, with President Whittlesey in the chair. Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone was reporting for the Case Committee: "Lemuel Bristow, a single man, thirty years of age, formerly a bank clerk, but not now at work owing to illness. His parents are dead. He has one attic room at No. 17 Bigelow Street, rent seventy-five cents per week. This being a new case, nothing more is yet entered on the card; but our agent has visited, and we will ask her to give us her impressions."

Miss Gaskell, the agent, reported as follows:

"I was summoned last Friday to 17 Bigelow Street by an anonymous note. I found there this young man confined to his bed with a spinal trouble. He had neither fuel nor food, and no money to buy them with. His room was exceptionally neat — quite free from the odor of beer or tobacco. As the

Conference was not to meet until to-day, I felt obliged to give interim relief, as well as a diet order. He seemed truly grateful, and I am inclined to believe him, in every respect, a worthy young man. I really feel very sorry for him. It is a common thing to find a deserving old man or old woman in a lonely and destitute condition; but I do not remember ever having found a deserving young man so situated. I understand, of course, that it is one of our principles to give no relief without a vote of the Conference, except in cases of absolute necessity. This seemed to me a case of that sort. I trust the Conference will approve my having given the interim relief."

The Conference having expressed its approval of the agent's action, Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone resumed:

"We all agree, I think, that interim relief, although, unfortunately, it has to be given in a case like this, really settles nothing. We always make it a point, do we not, to devise some plan of permanent value? This is such an unusual case that I hope the Conference will give its very best thought to finding a solution that will not tend to pauperize."

"Has anybody a plan to suggest for this very interesting young man?" asked President Whittlesey. "As he is unmarried and has no parents, there can be no danger of

breaking up a home or of relieving a family of its natural and proper burden. My first impulse, therefore, would be to send him to a hospital; but I am afraid there is no hospital that takes in cases of this kind, at least none that is available without long waiting. Am I right, Miss Gaskell? You are more familiar than I with the hospital regulations."

Miss Gaskell nodded assent.

"So I thought," continued President Whittlesey. "That being true, Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone is quite correct in saying we must devise some worthy plan of permanent value. In a matter of so much importance, the Conference should be very free in its expressions of opinion."

"Are you quite sure the fellow is ill?" queried Mr. John Stimson, the only man in the Conference except the president. "It is easy to sham sickness for financial ends, and it is often done, as you know. Wouldn't it be a good idea to have this fellow examined by a reliable physician, before any plan for his future is seriously discussed?"

"You would not doubt the poor young man's condition for a single instant if you could see how pale and wasted he is," remonstrated Miss Gaskell. "No one could look into that honest face, either, without knowing that it did not belong to an impos-

tor. I don't think we need to resort to outside help to discover that he is ill. Any one can see that."

"Well, I dare say you are right," acquiesced Mr. Stimson; "you visit these people so much more than I that you are not so easily deceived as, I have to confess, I am. If, then, this young man is really ill, and has, as you think, all of the virtues and none of the vices, we cannot be too kind to him. With so much to build on in the way of character that is usually lacking, a strong and wise personal influence, properly applied, can hardly fail to be highly effective. It looks to me like a capital opening for a friendly visitor."

"If I may be allowed to speak for the Case Committee," said Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, "that has been their decision also. Consequently they are very glad to hear it from the Conference. It seemed to them a great pity that so promising a young man should be pauperized, as he is almost sure to be if he gets out of our hands into those of indiscriminate givers; and he is almost certain to get out of our hands, unless we take a friendly as well as an official interest in him. Besides, we need more facts. While I have no doubt in my own mind that our agent is quite right in her estimate of Mr. Bristow, we have learned the rare wisdom of caution, have we

not? Only the barest outlines of the situation are as yet before us. Other things, important for us to know, are sure to be revealed to a visitor in the course of friendly, confidential chats; and when the visitor shall have reported these to us, we shall be in a better position to arrange a comprehensive scheme of action."

President Whittlesey nodded emphatic assent. "Our supply of visitors is so limited," he said, "that we are trying, as you all know, to reserve them for families with children; because children are most readily influenced. But we must guard against being too *doctrinaire*. That we can afford to make an exception in this instance I am confident. A friendly visitor is bound to be the making of such a promising young man. Mr. Stimson, it was you, I believe, who made this very wise suggestion. Can you not undertake to be the friendly visitor yourself? It is preëminently a case for a man."

"I am sorry," Mr. Stimson replied, after a moment's hesitation. "Frankly, I should like nothing better. But I am just now so occupied with a piece of special business that I must beg off. I am shamefully neglecting the two cases I have now. It is quite out of the question for me to think of taking on another."

Mrs. Breck declined the case because she had made up her mind to deal only with children; Mrs. Brimsmead, because she was to be in New York over the holidays; Mrs. Robson, because she was afraid to climb so many flights of stairs; and Miss Caldwell, because it did not seem to her quite the thing for a young unmarried woman to call on a young man living by himself — even for sweet charity's sake.

Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, whose strict charity conscience permitted her neither fears, scruples, nor preferences, then volunteered her services; and the case of Lemuel Bristow was disposed of for that day.

"I am so sorry you did not see your way clear to visit that young man," Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone remarked to Mr. Stimson, after the adjournment of the Conference. "It is such an ideal opportunity for a man. I really ought not to take on any more people myself. I have three cases in Bigelow Street already; but there are emergencies in our work in which it is our duty to do more than we ought. You'll pardon the paradox, please? You know what I mean," she added, with a significant smile.

Three days later Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone paid her first visit to Lemuel Bristow. She was received with a polite consideration that she

had long ceased to expect from her beneficiaries. He apologized for not rising to hand her a chair, by making a humorous reference to his helpless condition; and, although she came as a stranger, he allowed no sign to escape him that he had not been expecting her visit. "I have looked in on you at Miss Gaskell's request," said Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, as soon as she was fairly seated. "You remember Miss Gaskell, the lady who called the other day and brought you the things you needed? Miss Gaskell is too busy just now to call again herself, but she feels very sorry for you and has asked me to keep her informed about you. So I have promised to call as often as I can — that is, if you are willing."

"It is asking a great deal of you, who must have so many social obligations, to spare me your time," responded Lemuel, "but I do hope you will come often, if it is not too great a burden. Do I remember Miss Gaskell? I should be an ungrateful wretch not to remember her after what she has done for me. Do you know Miss Gaskell actually saved my life? I was at the very end of my resources; I should have starved to death but for her. It is beautiful of her to inquire for me and of you to bring her message and — better still — yourself. When next you see Miss

Gaskell thank her warmly for me, I beg of you."

They talked together more than an hour on a great variety of subjects. Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone was amazed and delighted by the young man's intelligence, geniality, and breeding. Once only during the conversation was he unresponsive. That was when she made bold to inquire into his past. Then he resorted to clever evasion that was an unequivocal, if well-bred, expression of his wish not to be questioned. When at last Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone left him, her delight in him had expanded into rapture.

Barely was she out of the room when the bedridden young man sprang to his feet. "The stupid old bore!" he ejaculated. "I began to think she'd got her mind made up to stay forever. Does she want to keep a fellow in bed all day? And she thought herself so infernally cunning with her quizzing! OH, MY EYE!!" and he burst into a boisterous fit of laughter, at the end of which he put on coat and hat and left the house.

Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone's report at the next Conference was replete with unction. "In all my work among the poor," she said, "I have not found so interesting and so satisfactory a case, and I have had many, very many, touching and beautiful experiences.

Mr. Bristow is not only genial and intelligent, he is positively refined. I never saw more engaging manners anywhere. It is very sad, is it not, that such a person should be destitute and friendless? He has not told me much about himself yet, but he has confessed to a good family and a college education. Think of it! In a Bigelow Street attic! He seems reluctant to talk about his past. But if the Conference will be indulgent with me for a little, I shall be able to give them all the facts. I am confident he will tell me everything in time. Do you know I have great hopes we shall be able to restore him, ultimately, to the circle from which he has somehow dropped, through no fault of his own, I am sure, and to which by birth and education he rightfully belongs?" She paused for breath.

"I shall be greatly obliged to the members of the Conference," she went on, "if they will make suggestions as to the immediate future, for I am a little perplexed."

Thereupon Mrs. Breck related how she had once forced an obstinately reticent case to a confidence by assuming to know things she was, in reality, ignorant of, and hinted that Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone might to advantage do the same. Miss Caldwell thought that device might work very well with a

simple-minded person; hardly with so subtle a character as Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone had shown this Mr. Bristow to be. It would surely be better under the circumstances to win the man's affection, and gradually work his feelings up to the point of a confidence.

Mr. Stimson declared that he still retained a remnant of male scepticism about this paragon. "I am constitutionally suspicious of saints," he said; "I cannot help prying about for the cat in the woodpile. I recommend offering some light work, just to see whether the fellow means business or not. If he is the educated man he claims to be, he must write a good hand. He can do copying, a little at a time, in spite of being confined to his bed. I will guarantee to provide him with an indefinite amount of such work, if you think best."

Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, though somewhat piqued by Mr. Stimson's attitude, expressed her gratitude for all the suggestions and promised to make the most of them.

Curiously enough, the first words of Lemuel Bristow to Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone on her next visit (after his polite greeting) were almost identical with Mr. Stimson's suggestion. "You are very good," he said, "you and Miss Gaskell, to do so much for me, but you cannot know how it hurts me to accept your

kindness. You see I never received a cent of alms in my life before. Isn't there some way I can work for what is given me? It will still be charity in reality, I know; but I shall not feel so despicable in accepting it. Of course I can't do much here, flat on my back. But I am a fair penman, and if you can get hold of a lap-board for me, I can do copying, at times, when the pain is not too severe."

Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone could hardly believe the witness of her own ears, but she was not the woman to be easily embarrassed, or to show embarrassment easily even if she felt it. "Poor boy!" she answered. "You must not take it so hard. We are only too willing to help you. We wish we knew how to do more. It seems almost cruel to allow such a bedridden sufferer to work; but if you are going to feel better about accepting the little things we bring you, — oh, so gladly! — it shall be as you say. I will send you a lap-board and your first batch of work to-morrow — if I am not able to bring them myself."

Then, thinking the time opportune for a confidence, Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone became so tender, so motherly, so tearfully solicitous, that answering tears came into Lemuel Bristow's eyes; and he told his story, a story, as Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone had prophesied, of

suffering, not of shame. Relatives and guardians had been guilty of chicanery and fraud whereby he had been cruelly swindled out of his birthright. Positive destitution, owing to his physical helplessness, had followed quickly on his loss.

Again Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone left her charge with a feeling of rapture. Again Lemuel Bristow sprang out of bed, called her a stupid old bore, and burst into a fit of boisterous, almost uncontrollable laughter before he took hat and coat to leave the house.

Mr. Bradshaw-Stone was one of the ablest lawyers in Boston. His wife never troubled him with her charities; that had been an understood thing since the second year of their marriage. She determined, however, to make an exception for once, and she cajoled him, the evening after that second visit, into promising to do all he could to restore Lemuel Bristow to his own.

It was a proud moment for Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone, the proudest of all her charity career, and that is saying a great deal, when she was privileged to announce in the Conference Lemuel's voluntarily expressed desire for work, and to repeat there the story of his sufferings and wrongs. She concluded her report after this fashion:

"I wish to ask the permission of the Con-

ference to send Dr. —— [naming a famous specialist] to attend Lemuel, — I know a B.I.[1] who will provide the money, — and to authorize my husband, who thinks Lemuel has a clear case against his guardians, to prosecute them in the courts."

It was a veritable *coup de génie* on the part of Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone. The Conference was electrified. Nothing so brilliant had happened in the Associated Charities of Boston since the Webber case in Ward LIII., seven years before. Nothing so brilliant had ever happened in Ward LIX.

John Stimson was obliged to leave the room at the dramatic moment — to keep from disgracing himself by an uncontrollable fit of laughter. He alone of all the Conference was not properly impressed by Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone's achievement; for Lemuel Bristow and John Stimson were one and the same person.

John Stimson, it should here be explained, was a young and clever down-town business man who had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and an honest desire to help the unfortunate. He had connected himself with Conference LIX. of the Associated Charities, several years

[1] B.I. stands for Benevolent Individual — an ingenious associated-charity device by which the fiction of no direct alms is kept up.

back, for the purpose of exercising his humanitarian instincts; but, for some reason (probably a defect in himself), he had found far more exercise for his humorous sense.

The self-complaisance and vaunted penetration of the veteran workers, Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone in particular, had alternately angered and convulsed him, according as his love of justice or his humor chanced to be uppermost.

He conceived a notion it would be the easiest thing in the world (and the greatest fun in the world) to deceive Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone or any other charity expert. Accordingly he had taken a disguise and a tenement. It was enough. What his success was has already appeared.

It had proved infinitely diverting to John Stimson to be a case and to "sit" on a case; to be visited, reported on, and discussed, and to take part in the discussion about himself. He had thus heard his mental and moral qualities extolled as he never expects to hear them extolled again. It was better than the proverbial attending one's own funeral.

When Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone went to seek Lemuel Bristow after her memorable report, first with the famous specialist, and second with her husband, she found his door locked. Nothing daunted, she continued to call every

day for a week. Then she paid a visit to the landlord.

"His tenant was gone — where, he didn't know, and what was more he didn't care; he was not behind with his rent."

The neighbors were no wiser.

Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone was prompt with a solution of the mystery. The villanous relatives had heard of Mr. Bradshaw-Stone's intervention, and had abducted Lemuel to prevent his coming into his rights.

Mr. Bradshaw-Stone did not share his wife's ingenious hypothesis, flattering as it was to his professional conceit — he was too shrewd a lawyer for that; but he was too wise a man to say so. The Ward LIX. Conference, on the other hand, received it gladly; for of gullibility on the part of such a veteran as Mrs. Bradshaw-Stone they did not dream.

The case of Lemuel Bristow is still regarded as a *cause célèbre* in Ward LIX. It is often referred to there — always with bated breath. At such times John Stimson smiles a curious smile, but he holds his peace.

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON IN BIGELOW STREET

A WHITE-HAIRED woman was standing on a chair in a Bigelow Street attic. She was leaning far over the sash of its only window and scrubbing its outside panes. A man, also white-haired, was on his knees, behind the chair, clinging tightly to the woman's skirt, with a look of tender solicitude on his face, very good to behold. It was an unusual sight for Bigelow Street — unusual, because it involved both neatness and honest husbandly affection. This my first view of the Livingstones gave me an instant and strong desire to see more of them.

One morning, a few days later, I chanced upon the old couple in a Cambridge Street bakery, just around the corner from Bigelow Street. They were in the midst of an earnest consultation regarding the investment of a silver quarter which the old lady was clutching with her right hand as tightly as a small child, on its way to the candy-shop, clutches

a copper cent. From the scraps of their talk that came to me, it was plain they were making preparations for a feast in honor of some sort of an anniversary. They bought a small loaf of sponge cake, a handful of ginger cookies, and half a dozen doughnuts; then, hand in hand, they moved slowly away, child-like anticipation showing in the relaxed lines of their wrinkled faces and in the happy lights of their faded eyes.

Just as they turned the corner of Bigelow Street, the man suddenly tottered and fell to the sidewalk. I ran to his assistance. "Don't be frightened," said his companion, observing alarm in my face. "David's took with the fits again, that's all. He's always bein' took that sudden. 'Tain't nothin' much, but I'd like to get 'im home. Ef you can manage to help me do that, I'll be much obliged. You see," she explained, "David's that sensitive he can't bear bein' stared at by a lot o' strange folks. An' he'd never git over bein' took by the wagon," glancing nervously this way and that to assure herself the ambulance was not coming.

I beckoned two men from the crowd which had already gathered, to help me. Together we bore the unconscious man, the woman leading the way, into No. 6 and up three flights of stairs to the attic, where we deposited

him carefully on the bed. Then, having dismissed my two helpers, I offered to go myself for a doctor.

"No, please, sir, don't go for no doctor,"— there was veritable pleading in the woman's tone,— "it's jest as I say; it's nothin' only the fits David's always bein' took with, an' when he's this way, he's kind o' shamed to be seen." She was working lustily over him, loosening his clothes and chafing his hands. "He don't like to have nobody 'roun' but jest me, not even the doctor. He's sort o' used to me, you see.

"Well, he'd orter be," she added with a sudden flash of pride and humor mingled, "considerin' as we've been a-livin' together forty-seven year this very day, an' he always a-bein' took. He'll be all right pretty quick. Why, I do declare he's comin' to a'ready, quicker'n common. Don't you wait no longer, please. They ain't a thing more you c'n do, an' you must want to git back to your work." There was nothing equivocal about the hint; the good woman wished to be left alone with her sensitive patient, that he might not be disturbed by the sight of a strange face when he came to. So I withdrew, promising to call again in the afternoon.

When I did call, a few hours later, David himself came to my knock. "Oh, yes," he

said in answer to my inquiry, "I'm better. I'm all right now. You must be the man as give me a lift this mornin'. Come in! Come in! 'Twarn't nothin' nohow, only jest the fits I'm always a-bein' took with. Do come in! We'll be ever so glad to see you. I'll take it reel kind of you, ef you'll come in an' chat a bit."

His importunity was so strenuous that I stepped inside. "That's right," he went on; "it's main good o' you to come in, for it shows you don't harbor no malice. I'm afeard Susan kind o' drove you off this mornin'. She felt reel kind o' mean about it afterwards.

"You see, 'tain't like Susan, noways, to send folks off. But she's took up a notion as how I don't like to have nobody 'roun' only jest her, when I'm a-comin' to. Well, mebbe she's took it up right. I guess I don't. I hope't didn't hurt your feelin's too much, though, the way she done it. We should be so sorry ef it hurt your feelin's. It didn't? Well, now, I'm glad ef it didn't. Howsomever, we want to see ef we can't make it up to you for our bad manners by havin' you join our weddin' annivers'ry. We're forty-seven year married this day, an' we're a-havin' a little celebration; that's why the table's set at this time o' day, an' that's why we've got

on these old-fashioned duds" (David was arrayed with rusty black and Susan with age-yellowed white, in the fashion of a full generation back); "they're our weddin' ones, an' they must look kind o' comical to you. But we like to put 'em on annivers'ry days, 'cause they makes the weddin' seem reel, like 'twas jest a-comin' off, an' makes us feel kind o' young an' peert again. It's many a long year sence we've had comp'ny at our annivers'ry, an' we'll be jest proud an' happy to have you for our guest. We was a-settin' down to eat this very minute when you rapped."

Susan having added a word of real entreaty, by way of atonement for her previous brusqueness, I accepted a seat at the white-covered table, whereon were spread the cake, doughnuts, and ginger cookies of the morning's purchase, as well as a loaf of home-made bread, a small jar of orange marmalade, and a pot of tea.

We bowed our heads, while David asked a grace as simple as the meal before him. "Now for the feast," he said after a decent pause.

"I warrant you're a-wonderin' why we call this here meal a feast," said Susan, as she poured the tea; "'tain't much of a spread, that's a fac', an' I'm afeard you won't make

out. But it's somethin', an' it's a sight more'n we git ev'ry day, so it'll have to do to celebrate with."

"'Tain't the victuals makes the feast, anyhow," said David, correcting her; "it's the good, pleasant comp'ny an' the thankful heart; an' we've got the two on 'em to-day, they ain't no manner o' doubt about that. Why, do you know, me 'n' Susan are so thankful to be spared to each other another year that we could make a feast off'n crackers an' water, ef it come to that? Couldn't we, Susan?"

With such wise words of noble content and honest compliment for sauce, the food was soon cleared from the table, or so nearly cleared that David claimed and was accorded the time-honored privilege of "kissing the cook." Then he lit his pipe and invited me to light mine, while Susan, "jest to be sociable," poured herself an extra cup of tea. "Tea's Susan's pipe an' terbaccer," David laughingly explained. "I kind o' like to have her drink tea while I smoke. It's good as fur as it goes, ef it don't go fur; you know yourself, bein' a smoker, 'tain't the same thing, after all, as ef we was a-smokin' together. What do you think? Sometimes I wish Susan used the real stuff, for all her bein' a woman."

"Why, David Livingstone, how you do talk! You wish I smoked? The idea!"

came, by way of remonstrance, from across the table.

"I do, Susan, I vow I do! yes, by the great horn spoon, I do!" David reiterated. "Your mother, Susan, an' my mother, both smoked a pipe, — they warn't no better women goin', that we know, — an' nobody thought any the less on 'em for't. But times is changed, I s'pose; yes, times is changed. I wonder, sometimes, be they better or be they worse. Anyhow, I'm jest as glad as c'n be you smoke a pipe. I've puffed and puffed away this many, many years, all by myself, an' it's been kind o' lonesome, I c'n tell you. Why, it seems jest like old times to have somebody to smoke with, an' it makes me feel quite a buck! Now, while we're on this here smokin' business, jest let me tell you somethin' about Susan.—Susan, it's a pussonal remark I'm a-goin' to make, an' you ain't supposed to hear.— Susan ain't one o' your fussy, naggin' women like I've seen some in my day. Ef she was, they wouldn't be no call for no celebrations, leastways not till I got to be a widower. Then you bet they'd be a whoppin' big one!"

"David, David! Stop, David! You're a'most blasphemin'!" cried Susan. "Ain't you ashamed o' yourself a-temptin' Providence a-speakin' that light o' death?" She

felt it her duty to correct the strong language, but she was inwardly pleased with the honest, hearty praise, nevertheless.

"Didn't I say beforehand, Susan, you warn't supposed to be listenin'?" retorted David. "They say listeners always hears things they don't want to hear, an' I guess that's right. Well, as I was a-sayin' jest before I was interrupted, Susan ain't always a-naggin' an' a-fussin'. She don't object to smokin' in the house, like some do, 'cause it makes ashes an' smell. She likes the smell, — 'tween me 'n' you, Susan takes a pinch o' snuff with me off an' on, — an' she counts it a privilege to clean up after me, whether it's ashes or street-mud. She's got to have somethin' to clean up, Susan has, an' the Lord knows she don't never make no dirt herself. It's a reel comfort to me she don't mind the smokin', for I couldn't take no pleasure, no, not a mite, a-doin' what worried Susan. An' there, I take it, I ain't no more like some smokers than Susan's like some women. But here I am a-talkin' sech a streak, I've let my pipe go out; for all I know, the whole o' my gab hain't got so much o' the reel stuff in it as one good puff out of a pipe o' terbaccer.

"You may be too perlite to show it," David resumed, when his pipe was relighted;

"all the same you can't help but think it's funny that we two old folks are a-livin' here all by ourselves in this big city, not to mention bein' on a street where they ain't nothin' but a lot o' dirty, drinkin', fightin', swearin', Catholic, Irish Papists (we can't have nothin' to do with an' keep ourselves respectable), an' a handful o' white-livered Protestants that ain't no better. Happen you'd like to hear the story on't. Me 'n' Susan, we've told it over 'n' over to each other the many, many times. I don't never get tired on't, though; I love to tell it. As the song says, 'I love to tell the story.' No, no, Susan, don't interrupt, I hain't no intention o' speakin' lightly; I don't mean no impiety, you know that jest as well as me. I ain't no good to talk nothin' else to-day, for my mind keeps travellin' 'way, 'way back, an' I feel moved, somehow, to tell it to you, that is, ef you don't mind listenin'." The social pipe — all honor to it! — had unlocked the old man's inmost soul. "Ef you do find it too wearin' before I stop, jest head me off like you would a cow as is actin' crazy."

It did not turn out to be so very much of a story: it was just a simple bit of life. There was little in it of humorous or pathetic situation, nothing of passion or dramatic incident. But coming to me as it did over a social pipe,

at the end of a wedding anniversary banquet, I was in no mood to be critical about it, and it interested me. I have not been able to summon my critical faculty since to anything connected with that unique occasion. In retrospect, the story still interests me. I venture to give it, therefore, as nearly as possible in the words in which it was told, omitting only — in the interests of clearness and brevity — my own questions, which were numerous, and Susan's observations, corrections, and remonstrances, which were more numerous still. For, though this story had been told at every anniversary for forty-seven years, and many a time between, David and Susan, with all their good love for each other, had been just as little able to agree upon the telling of it, as have the apostles of the Church in two thousand years upon the telling of that other " old, old story " — of salvation.

" I don't belong to these parts at all," said David, " though I've lived so long in 'em that I've got to eat jest as queer an' talk jest as queer as the Yanks themselves. Still, I ain't no Yank. I warn't born here, an' I can't vote here; I hain't never been nat'ralized, an' I don't never mean to be. I was born on a farm, away down East, in Nova Scotia, nigh to Digby Gut. Father he come from England, Yorkshire; mother she was Scotch.

We was seven children all told, five boys of a kind an' two girls of a kind. What's oncommon, we all on us lived to grow up. I'm the only one alive now, but that's nat'ral enough, considerin' I was the youngest, an' I'm nigh on to eighty a'ready. Father's farm warn't nothin' like big enough to support us all. So three of us boys worked out as hired hands summers, an' went lumberin' winters. I kep' that up till long after I was man-grown; but the lumberin' was mighty heavy for me, seein's I had a fit every little while that took my strength, an' the pay was so snippin' I couldn't lay nothin' by. So I made my mind up to go to the States, where wages was better an' I could get along without the heavy lumberin'. An' I calkilate I did right to go. You see this's the way 'tis: Ef a man's got a farm all clear, like father had, or Sam (he was the oldest) had after him, he'd be foolish to sell out an' go to the States or anywhere. But ef he hain't, the quicker he gits up an' gits out o' them Provinces the better. He won't never earn no farm a-workin' on one — nor a fish-hook neither. Leastways, that's how 'twas when I left Digby Gut, an' from all that I c'n make out, 'tain't no different now.

"Well, I come to the States when I was twenty-nine, to Massachusetts, an' I got a

good job straight off, out Sudb'ry way, on Deacon Whitcomb's farm; the same place where Susan here was workin' as hired help. Susan she jest filled my eye right on the start; I hadn't been to the deacon's more'n a week, seems if, before I was a-courtin' of her. Mebbe you won't believe it, but for all I was nigh on to thirty, she was the very first girl ever I was sweet on in my life. I hain't got Susan to believe it yet, though I've been tellin' it to her ever sence, — told it to her this very afternoon, — an' I don't s'pose I ever shall. But it's the gospel truth. That's the way 'tis with a woman. Ef she takes a notion about a thing into her head, you can't no more drive it out o' her'n you can out of a buzzin' muskeeter when it takes a notion you're good feedin'. Susan says to me, says she, 'I've set eyes on them handsome, bouncin' Bluenose girls many's the time, an' you can't make me think (a spooney thing like you) you didn't make up to 'em. Mebbe I be green an' simple, David Livingstone, but I ben't so green 'n' simple's all that. I know you're scrup'lous truthful 'bout most things,' she says, 'but when it comes to talkin' sweethearts, you men, you're all off the same piece; under them circumstances I don't trust *no man*.'

"Now, I hain't never denied that those Blue-

nose girls, some on 'em, was plump an' pooty to look at; but they was that lumpish I never took to 'em noway. Susan, she was a heap sight pootier'n any on 'em. She minded me in them days o' these sweet-smellin' pink roses as blows in huckleberry pastures 'fore huckleberry-time, more'n anythin'." — [You who love emotional expression should have seen the beautiful blush of pleasure that mantled Susan's withered cheeks at these words.] — "She was pootier'n any on 'em, an' what's more, she was proper spry an' bright-spoken. Why, they warn't no more comparison 'tween her an' them Bluenose girls'n they is 'tween good, hard, beady cider an' cold merlasses.

"As I was a-sayin', I took to courtin' Susan inside of a week. Well, Susan she didn't take to me noway. Ef I hadn't 'a' meant business I'd 'a' give up 'fore ever I got fair started. But I warn't no half-grown boy. I knowed what I wanted an' meant to git it. So I jest kep' right on a-courtin' of her, an' Susan she couldn't help herself, with us both a-livin' in the same house. But warn't she offish! You see, she was a real Yank an' a Orthodox to boot, like the deacon an' all o' his folks, an' I was a Bluenose an' a Presbyterian. Now, Susan fair hated Britishers an' everythin' as warn't the same church as hern.

She give me no end o' lip-sass 'bout red-coats an' heathins. That, nor nothin' else she did, didn't make no difference with me. I stuck to't like eel-slime sticks to a man's pants. I kep' right on a-courtin' of her three whole year, an' I'd 'a' kep' on ten year 'fore I'd 'a' give up.

"The first year, she said straight up an' down she didn't like me an' she wouldn't have me.

"The second year, she said she liked me well enough, but she couldn't never bring her mind to marry no Britisher nor no Presbyterian, let alone a man as was the both on 'em rolled into one. She'd think about havin' me, though, ef I'd get nat'ralized an' join the Orthodox — as ef a man could change his religion an' his country like he'd change his shirt an' his stockin's; but that, you know, 's the way women look at religion an' politics (other folkses'), as jest so much paper 'an' string for to make a tail for their own kite with.

"The third year, the end o' the year, I mean, she give in. Said she liked me a hundred per cent. better'n any man she'd ever set eyes on, an' she was goin' to marry me in spite of my not bein' a Yank or a Orthodox, though she'd jest about as soon marry a jail-bird or a heathen Chinee. An' my

notion is that ef Susan had reelly got her feelin's sot on the Devil himself she'd a-married him.

"So we two got married. An' I hain't never regretted it, you jest bet; an' I guess Susan hain't, neither, though I hain't never got nat'ralized nor joined the Orthodox. Some folks do say they ain't no reel difference between Presbyterian an' Orthodox (Congregationalist they calls it nowadays), but me 'n' Susan we've talked it all over a hundred times, an' we know they is. Else, if they ain't, why can't me 'n' Susan agree, an' why don't the Orthodox come back an' be Presbyterians again? What for do they keep a-holdin' off, I'd like to know?

"But here I be a-gettin' clean out o' the road, like Deacon Whitcomb's old sorrel when the deacon was a-studyin' his Sunday lesson on the way to meetin'. All this theology business — though I ain't a-denyin' the ser'ousness on't — hain't got nothin' to do with my yarn. So I guess I'd better jump back into the road again.

"The deacon bein' partial to me outdoors, an' the deacon's wife to Susan indoors, they didn't want to lose us when we got married. So the deacon partitioned off one end o' his big house for us to live in, an' we worked right on for 'em jest the same as we did before.

"We had Jimmy an' Fanny there, to the deacon's; they're in the Sudb'ry cemet'ry now. They was both kind o' peekid an' spindlin' an' didn't live long; an' we never had no more there, nor anywheres. They'd 'a' been middle-aged now ef we'd 'a' been able to raise 'em, an' 'a' been raisin' Jimmies an' Fannies o' their own.

"I said's how I used to have some fits down East. Well, it seemed, the first years to the deacon's like I'd a'most outgrown 'em — only had 'em now an' then, one in six months or so — an' it kep' on that way till after the children was took. The very nex' summer — Jimmy an' Fanny both died the same spring — them fits got a hold of me again. I don't know what 'twas; p'r'aps 'twas the heat. Anyhow, they begun gettin' worse in hayin'-time, an' they kep' gettin' worse, an' they hain't never stopped gettin' worse sence.

"The deacon never let me leave the farm as long as he lived. He didn't think o' turnin' me off jest for bein' fitty; he warn't that sort of a man. But when his boy, Joe, an' Joe's highty-tity city wife, come to run the place, everythin' had to be turned topsy-turvy to suit their notions right away. Lyddy, the deacon's widder, didn't like to have things changed; but she was that cowed by 'em she darsent say her soul was her own, let alone

standin' up for other people. Joe didn't like us old-fashioned things 'roun'; so 'twarn't long before we had to quit.

"Much as we'd 'a' liked to seen Lyddy, we hain't never had the heart to go back to the farm sence. We've been out to the Sudb'ry cemet'ry, though, as much as four times, to carry flowers for the children. It's a cur'ous thing: the last time we went I had the worst fit ever I had in my life, right there on their graves. Susan reelly thought she'd got to leave me there for good with Jimmy an' Fanny, an' it frightened her so she hain't never dared to let me go there sence.

"When we was forced to leave the deacon's, we had pretty nigh on to a thousand dollars saved up between us — a fair enough pile, but not so's to live on without doin' nothin'. I was gettin' a little old to begin my life over again with any new kind o' work. On t'other hand, 'twarn't much use for me to try an' do farm-work, for I warn't right up to't no more. Everybody out Sudb'ry way had heard how fitty I was, an' ef you've ever tried to sell a fitty hoss, you know jest about how they looked at me. I might have gone away off somewheres, I s'pose, an' took a place with strangers; but the fact is, I didn't think 'twould be quite square for me to palm myself off for a sound man, when I was only a poor broken-

down fitty one. I know some church-folks does it with hosses, but I hain't never been able to reconcile it with their profession, an' Susan, too, she's jest of my way o' thinkin'.

"So we made our minds up we'd best go to the city. We calkilated they'd be plenty o' easy, genteel work I could do out o' the sun, an' plenty o' washin an' sewin' for Susan. Besides, we'd each have our own church to go to there, — the which I'd never had in Sudb'ry, where Presbyterians was as scarce as katydids in June.

"Well, they's been off seasons sence we come to the city, but on the whole Susan done pooty well with the washin' an' sewin' until the last three years — her eyes an' her back's been too bad to do very much with th' one or t'other. I've tried ev'ry sort o' work, but I hain't reelly accomplished nothin'.

"First thing, I bought out a little store. I paid high for my goods an' sold low instead o' t'other way; an' I trusted out a sight more'n I got cash for. The upshot was I was glad enough to sell out at the end of a year for less'n half what I'd paid.

"Then, I did peddlin' an' book canvassin', but they didn't turn out no better. Good Lord! I didn't have no more business in me 'n' a suckin' calf, not to mention frightenin' my customers with fits.

"Next thing I drove a grocer's delivery wagon. I was always a powerful clever hand with hosses, an' the boss liked me first-class spite o' the fits, which I'd told 'im about before I hired. Bime-by, though, I tumbled off the seat in one of 'em, an' the hosses run away an' smashed things dreadful. The boss shipped me, of course, an' I can't say's I blame him.

"After that, I worked in a stable, run a elevator, took care of a down-town buildin', tended furnaces, beat carpets, cleaned paint, an' carried a sandwich board advertisin' bug poison; fact is, they ain't nothin' honorable's I know on that I didn't do. But in every blessed thing I've had a fit at the very worst time, except jest in carryin' the board. Not but what I had fits carryin' the board too, only in that they did more good than harm. The more fits I had the better 'twas for the business. I always drawed a crowd with a fit, an' that's what a sandwich board's for. I didn't like the notion o' bein' made a exhibition of like a freak in a dime museum; but I kep' at it spite o' the hurt to my feelin's jest as long as I was able. Sence I give up the board-carryin', I hain't done nothin' at all, not even odd jobs. Besides my bein' too feeble now to work, 'tain't safe for me to go out by myself no more. I go to bed at half-

past four and stay till half-past six every afternoon; that shows what a good-for-nothin' old plug I am. Them's the hours the fits mostly comes; an' ef I c'n manage to get to sleep, jest as like as not I don't have 'em.

"While Susan was a-workin' steady, we had a three-room tenement in a nice, quiet street, for $2.50 a week; but we had to give that up over three year ago. This room does us well enough; it's kitchin, dinin'-room, settin'-room, an' bedroom all in one, an' we only pay fifty cents for't. We've got over $300 in the bank still — some in Susan's name an' some in mine. The minister to the church where Susan used to go (she can't go nowhere now, 'cause she can't leave me alone) comes to see us now an' then, an' he says as how we'd orter take our money out o' the bank an' buy us a place in a Old Folks' Home; an' sometimes we've had thoughts o' doin' it. We've dreaded it so, though, that we've kep' puttin' it off an' puttin' it off, an' I don't much think now we'll ever git roun' to it. I'll allow it looks more sensible on the face on't than the way we're a-livin' now; for, once we bought our places to the Home, we'd be took care on jest as long's we lived. Still, we don't rightly like to do it. You'll think we're foolish, like the minister does, I s'pose, an' mebbe we be; but it seems to us almost as

bad as goin' to jail. Ef we could have our choice, we'd rather live only three year out of a Home than twenty year in one.

"We've hern tell some things about the Home as has turned us ag'in it. They set a hotel table there, they say, an' have waiter girls bring the victuals on, a little at a time, in what they call 'courses,' instid of puttin' 'em all on to the table to begin with. An' they say they's a sideboard with silver on it, an' they expec's you to eat with a fork, an' they let strangers in to look at you eatin', like you was the wild-animal part of a circus. Susan would be jest miserable ef she couldn't go into the kitchin an' see to gittin' the meals; but, accordin' to what they say, they ain't none o' them inmates — they call 'em 'inmates,' mind you, jest like in a jail — allowed to step foot in that kitchin.

"I know for a fac' — no hearsay about it — that the men can't smoke their pipes in the room they live in. They make 'em go down cellar to do it, jest as ef they was a-doin' somethin' sneakin'. Now, you know, an' I know, that when a man wants to smoke, he wants to smoke straight off, a-settin' or a-layin', right where he is. They might jest as well send him off down cellar to read his Bible an' say his prayers; an' I wouldn't be surprised to hear that they did. Don't you

see, Susan couldn't drink tea while I smoked? We couldn't have our little annivers'ries neither, not in any peace an' privacy; an' we hain't never missed some kind of a celebration since we was first married — forty-seven year back.

"What's worse'n all, Susan says they separate man an' wife there. I can't hardly believe it; it don't seem's so they'd be that cruel. Still, you can't tell nothin' about what awful things they may do in these here institootions. I hain't been took with a fit in ten year 'thout Susan by me. What ef I should be took with one in that there Home an' never come out of it (as has got to happen some day), an' Susan shouldn't be sent for till I stopped breathin'! I want Susan to be right on hand to shet my eyes when that last fit comes, an' she wants to be there. Ef she warn't I believe 'twould kill her.

"No, no! We've thought over it an' we've talked over it an' we've prayed over it, but 'twon't do for us. We couldn't neither of us stand it. We wouldn't know what to do nor how to behave. We'd both be powerful oneasy along o' such fool finery. Susan's minister, he means all right, but he don't jest onderstand the sort we are. That kind of a Home may do for decayed gentle folks, but we ain't that; we're jest plain as plain homespun, an' 'tain't no

place for us, I'm confident. So long's Susan's able to work the bit she does now, we c'n manage to rub along jest about's we're doin', 'thout no charity. We c'n keep from starvin' (I can't eat much, an' Susan she won't), an' c'n have a bit o' tea, an' tebaccer besides. When Susan can't work no more, we'll draw on our savin's, an' we'll keep on a-drawin', ef need be, till they ain't nothin' to draw. We earned 'em fair an' square, an' hain't nobody to leave 'em to, an' we want to have the satisfaction of 'em jest in our own way. We're not good for long, neither on us, an' we'll likely both be gone before all the money is. Ef we don't happen to be lucky enough to both on us die before the money's give out, we c'n go to the poor-house, an' that'll be a *darned* sight better for us (I beg your pardon for that there word) than a high-steppin' institootion full o' played-out gentle folks who'd look down on sech as us (same as Joe Whitcomb an' his wife did), 'cause our table-manners ain't jest accordin' to Gunter.

"But I've told you all they reelly is to tell long ago, an' here I am a-goin' on, a-sputterin' an' a-spittin', an' a-snarlin', an' well-nigh a swearin' (for when I gets to darn, damn ain't never fur off) about our trials an' tribulations; a-makin' as big a fuss over nothin' as an old hen, an' that's the foolest thing God

ever made excep' possibly 'tis a chipmunk. It's high time I quit, I take it. After all, we hain't got no trouble worth mentionin' 'side o' what some folks has got. You see we're pretty well off. So long's we've got each other, they ain't nothin' much to complain of. Is they, Susan?"

"No, David, they ain't," Susan replied. "We've every reason to be thankful, as I'm always a-remindin' of you. I wonder ef you realize it's half-past four a'ready — jest the time for your nap. Well, well, seein' it's the annivers'ry, an' you've had one fit to-day so you ain't likely to have another, I guess it'll do to let you set up jest as long as you please."

"All right, Susan, we'll smoke one more pipe together, me an' the gentleman, an' you'll smoke another cup o' your terbaccer — 'twon't hurt you a mite. Susan, annivers'-ries don't come but once a year! — an' then we'll read in the Book. That there's the Book on the bureau," turning to me and pointing to an enormous family Bible. "The deacon give it to us for our weddin', an' it's got written down in it when me 'n' Susan was married, 'n' when Jimmy an' Fanny was born an' when they died. When we've done readin', then mebbe we'll let you go, ef you'll give us your word to come again. Don't

wait for another annivers'ry, though — we mayn't last that long."

When the pipes and the tea were finished, Susan brought the Book.

"We always read, me 'n' Susan, turn an' turn about, a verse at a time," said David, "an', ef you're willin', we'll be glad to have you take your turn."

Thus we read together the chapter they had always read on their wedding anniversary — their favorite, the fourteenth of John:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. . . .

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The sweet, the grand words of assurance were never sweeter and grander than they were on this old couple's loving, believing lips.

Then David prayed:

"Dear God, our heavenly Father, who lovest us an' all Thy children more than earthly parents ever love their children, even more, we believe it, Lord, than me 'n' Susan ever loved Jimmy an' Fanny — an' Thou

knowest, Lord, how we loved them! — we beseech Thee to be with us an' to grant us Thy blessin'. An' we know Thou wilt be with us, Lord, for Thou hast said in Thy holy word, that wheresoever two an' three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou wilt be in the midst of them.

"Thou knowest, Lord, that this is the annivers'ry of our weddin' day. Bless, we pray Thee, this our holy marriage union in the years to come, even as Thou hast blessed it in the years that have gone. Grant us, as Thou hast always done before, some new witness of Thy grace. Bring us as much nearer Thee in our desires and deeds, this day, at the end of another year, as we are nearer Thee in time.

"Thou hast told us over an' over again, lovin' Father, to come to Thee with everythin' that is upon our hearts, an' Thou knowest that our dear, dead children are on our hearts always, most of all on this our weddin' day. There be many, O God, who say it is sinful to pray for the dead. But Thou art the God of all, the God of the dead as well as the God of the livin', an', ef it be not sinful, we implore Thee to keep bright in Jimmy's an' Fanny's hearts the mem'ry of their old father an' mother, an' to make 'em, ef Thou hast not a'ready made 'em, perfec'

even as Thou art perfec'. Ef it be not accordin' to the Scripter' to pray Thee so, impute it not to us for sin, good Lord, for as such we mean it not.

"Especially do we pray Thee, our Father, for the stranger that is within our gates. We thank Thee for sendin' him to us to lighten our hearts on this our weddin' day, — for that Thou didst send him, we know. Reward him for his kindness to us, we beseech Thee. Make the light of Thy face to shine upon him, an' be gracious unto him an' give him peace in all his walk an' way; for inasmuch as he has done it unto us, the least of Thy little ones, he has done it unto Thee.

"Bless Thy children ev'rywhere, Thou great an' good God. Bless Thy Church, which ain't jest Susan's church, nor jest my church; but which's somethin' like 'em, an' big enough to more'n hold 'em both. Merciful God, be with these poor people all about us who know not Thee, who worship false gods or no God. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

"We have jest read in Thy Book, dear Father, that Thou hast prepared a mansion for us in the heavens, where we can always live an' never be separated, for they'll be no death there. It's the greatest comfort we

have, an' we thank Thee for it, Lord. It is far more'n we deserve. But Thou hast told us to ask what we will an' it shall be given, an' so we make bold to ask more. We do pray Thee, O Lord, that me 'n' Susan mayn't never be separated so long's we both live on this earth; an' that it may be given us to leave this life at one an' the same time, or within only ever so little a while of each other, an' to be buried side by side.

"All these things we ask in the name of Christ, our Redeemer. Amen."

When at last I left the devoted old couple, part of their closing petition was already answered; for I had resolved to be to them a good Providence (I say it not irreverently) by seeing to it that they were not separated so long as they both lived, and that they were decently buried side by side.

To die as they wish to die is with one only Power to grant. You who believe in prayer, pray for that.

MOLLY AND GIUSEPPE

A WORTHY sentiment eventuates in a shocking crime. Out of the best comes the worst; it is the irony of low life—of all life. But if such a conjunction revolts you, pray pass this narrative by: it is not for you.

Molly Richards' father and mother died when she was little more than a baby. She remembered nothing clearly about them, though she had a couple of hideous scars on her body to remember them by.

The neighbors and the police remembered them only too well as hard drinkers, and as worse things. Husband and wife, it seems, had levied blackmail together whenever they could lay their hands on a stranger; at other times the husband had rented the wife to his friends.

As Molly was an only child, without known kith or kin, she was taken over, after her parents' death, by old Rosa Pullen, a basket-beggar, who just then had need in her

business of a tiny grandchild to point her pleadings with.

Granny Pullen compelled Molly to beg with her and for her, if compulsion can fairly be said to be used where no desire to resist is involved; but she dealt out no very serious beatings to her little charge — she was more stupid than ugly when she was drunk; — more than that, she really loved her after an uncouth fashion of her own.

Molly Richards and Giuseppe Moretti first met in a North End dance-hall. Molly was then a saucy girl of sixteen; Giuseppe a handsome, dark-eyed Italian laborer, two or three years her senior. The dance-hall was one of those to which, for obvious reasons, women are admitted without charge. It was a dingy, low-posted, square room, behind free-swinging green-leather doors, on the ground floor of a rickety wooden building. It was quite bare of furnishings, except a few benches nailed to the floor and walls and a small bar in one corner, tended by a big and burly man who also acted as bouncer, a far from nominal function in this place. The music was a rasping fiddle fiercely sawed by a blind man, who was a street-corner performer daytimes. The *habitués* were sailors and street-loafers, and those beer-bloated, foul-mouthed, painted, thirsty women who

abound in the water streets of seaport cities the wide world over — poor Jack being the least fastidious of roistering reprobates through stress of cruel circumstance.

At the end of every dance, each cavalier led his lady to the bar and gallantly pledged her in the drink of her choice, usually a beverage as fierce and rasping as the music it succeeded.

Neither Molly nor Giuseppe properly belonged with the *habitués*. Giuseppe, in point of fact, had never been in the room before, and had come in with a couple of comrades, this particular night, solely out of curiosity. Molly dropped in only now and then for the sake of the dancing, of which, from her earliest childhood, she had been inordinately fond. In summer she found on the sidewalk chances enough to dance, but in winter there was little or nothing save this within her means. It is only fair to her to say that she came for the dancing alone, absolutely without ulterior motive, and that she had invariably repelled the male importunity which environed her. This was not because of particularly exalted ideas, — Granny Pullen was not exactly the woman to inculcate those, — but because the men there did not please her, and she was not the kind of a girl to set financial advantage above feeling.

Molly and Giuseppe became enamored of each other this night of their first meeting. The dance-hall furnished a convenient rendezvous. So, during the rest of that winter, they were *habitués* there. And, inasmuch as they were both young and healthy, and ignorant of the precepts of conventional morality, they surrendered themselves to the natural impulse to give the fullest possible expression to their affection. The result was that Molly, while still only seventeen, gave birth to a child at a maternity hospital.

On her release from the hospital, she came to Giuseppe with the child. Giuseppe received her willingly, and they took a little tenement together on Fleet Street. The young parents named the child Giovanni, and they both loved him.

At nineteen, Molly had a second child at the maternity hospital. It was only to save trouble and expense that she patronized the public institution, for she and Giuseppe were still scrupulously faithful to each other. The second child was called Rosa, in remembrance of Granny Pullen, who had died about a month before its birth. This child, too, the parents loved.

Not long after Rosa's birth, Molly took to drinking heavily, for no apparent reason; it was beyond question the sudden outcropping

of an hereditary taint. So completely did the desire for drink possess her that three months after the first collapse she was sent to the Woman's Prison at Sherborn, having been arrested several times for drunkenness, and fined once for assault, in the meantime.

During the mother's incarceration, Giuseppe took the best of care of Rosa and Giovanni; but he was so stung by the disgrace of the prison that he refused to receive her back when she returned to town at the expiration of her sentence. He wished to keep the children, and would have done so had not Molly gone into such a frenzied state at the bare suggestion that he felt constrained to let them go.

Molly rented a tenement at the West End, and there, in spite of the fact that she had never been trained to regular work, she tried as hard as ever a poor woman tried to make an honest living. Such washing, scrubbing, and plain sewing as were to be had she did; but these were not always forthcoming. There were frequent intervals of discouragement, when lack of work and the dreadful craving for drink drove her almost frantic. She was still young and attractive enough to make an easy living off her youth and beauty, but from this her abiding love for Giuseppe, if nothing else, restrained her.

This love, moreover, instead of waning with separation from its object, as love is reputed to do, waxed mightier and mightier, until in time it fairly overwhelmed her. She neglected her work and her children to dog Giuseppe's footsteps by day and watch his doorway by night. Finally she penetrated to his room and made a mad, carnal, attempt to win him. It was too much. Giuseppe, beside himself with rage at her effrontery, cursed her to her face. He swore that he would take the children from her by main force, and send her back to Sherborn, if she ever dared show herself again. Not content with this, he beat her brutally and kicked her down the stairs. Molly did not mind the physical abuse much, — there was a subtle kind of luxury in that, — but the threat against the children entered her inmost soul, and she crawled home, a shrinking prey to infinite terror.

The bruises healed in a little time; the terror abided with her. She was as intent on avoiding Giuseppe as she had been on being near him. She left the house rarely, never without taking the children with her. She sat by the hour in her tenement, as patient as a watch-dog and as ready to leap at the throat of the first intruder. She heard ominous sounds, and saw ominous sights, that

existed for her alone. She worked little, slept little, ate little, and — curious phenomenon! — drank not at all. The one mighty terror had supplanted everything within her, be it appetite or emotion.

So it was for at least a month. Then, one morning, Molly arose happy, almost hilarious, — all the terror gone. A way of setting everything right had been revealed to her during the night — a way so simple, and yet so effective, that she could not understand why she had not thought of it at the very first, and so avoided the horrible agony of the days since that last meeting with Giuseppe. It was: first to get Rosa and Giovanni out of danger by killing them; afterward, as she would have absolutely nothing to live for, without them and without Giuseppe's love, to kill herself.

Elated as she was over her plan, she deferred until evening the execution of it, lest some person or some thing might interfere. By way of preparation, she ventured, during the day, to buy a bunch of candles and a few cents' worth of cut flowers. That was all.

After dark, when the two children were sound asleep, she closed the blinds, locked the windows and doors, drew the curtains, spread a clean white cover on the table, got her largest wash-tub out from under the sink,

scrubbed it thoroughly, set it in the middle of the floor, and filled it with water. Then she went to the bed.

"We'll all go to heaven together," she said, as she stood over the children; and she laughed aloud and clapped her hands as she said it. "They can't steal you away from me there; and some day papa Joe" (Molly always called Giuseppe "Joe") "will come, too."

She lifted two-year-old Rosa off the bed, clasped her to her breast, and kissed her.

"Come, Rosy-posy, mamma wants you to go to heaven," she murmured. "That's a dear!"

Rosa wriggled a little, snuggled up closer, and smiled, — she was dreaming a pretty dream — but she did not wake. Molly bore her to the tub, placed her deep in the water, and held her there till she was dead. Then she laid her on the white-covered table, and went for Giovanni, whom the drowning of his sister — so featly it had been accomplished — had not in the least disturbed.

When 'Giovanni felt a pair of arms around him, he rubbed his eyes with his fists and began to whimper.

"No, no, 'Vani, don't cry! Hush, dearie, do hush!" Molly entreated. "Mamma's got something nice to tell you — Oh, so nice!

Mamma's going to send 'Vani to heaven. Ain't that splendid? Heaven, you know, 's just the finest place — all the candy an' cake an' oranges you c'n eat, an' more, too, an' — an'— maybe a teenty-tiny bicycle — just for 'Vani — I shouldn't wonder! Rosy she's gone, an' mamma's going too, just as soon as she can get ready. Does 'Vani want to go?"

The boy was by this time all laughter and large-eyed wonder.

"Ess, mamma, 'Vani go — go kick! Get bikle!" he blurted out, trying to leap to the floor.

"That's right, dearie, I knew you'd want to go. But you must sit still. Keep close to mamma, that's a good boy. Now don't move till I tell you. Oho, 'Vani! There you go! So!"

Gurgling water drove the laughter from his throat and the wonder from his eyes. He struggled with all the strength of an angry, sturdy four-year-old; but the determined woman kept his head down till he, too, was dead. Then she laid him beside Rosa on the white-covered table. She removed the drenched night-shifts from both, straightened the contorted limbs, wiped dry the naked little bodies, returned them to the bed from which she had taken them, dressed them fully in their finest garments, put coppers on their

eyelids, strewed over them the cut flowers purchased that day, and finally — she had imbibed so much of the Catholic ritual from Giuseppe — set a line of lighted candles round the bed.

Molly stood off to view her work with a happy look of triumph in her eyes.

"Oh, but ain't they two beautiful corps!" she exclaimed. "Just as sweet and pretty as life, all but them coppers, an' they'll get them coppers took off to-morrow, I'll warrant. They're both in heaven now. I'm that glad I done it. Maybe they'll fret a little till I come too, but that won't be for long. I must just write a letter to Joe, — I want Joe to see the pretty things before they put 'em away, — and then I'll be all ready."

This is what she wrote:

dere jo:

Good by jo, i luv yu, yu no i do and i alwaz did; but yu dont luv me no mor, so i cood nut let yu stele our childrun. i hev nuthin but mi childrun. yu no yu cood hev them childrun, if yu wood take me bak, but yu wood nut and now its too late. i hev sent rosy and vani to heven tonite and i'm goen too when i get this leter dun which is most dun. i hev put the dore kee in the leter so yu ken get in to us without the perlice. i luv yu, jo, good by dere, sum day i'll se yu in heven and then yu'll luv me agen like yu usd to i gess

yur luving

MOLLY.

Molly dropped the letter from the window to the sidewalk, confident some one would find it and mail it before morning. Then, having fastened three heavy flat-irons about her neck with a stout cord, because she doubted the sufficiency of her unaided courage, she knelt beside the tub and dropped her head into the water.

Sane or insane, who dares to say? Sane or insane, what does it matter? Molly Richards loved Giuseppe Moretti. Sane or insane, the deed of death was the deed of a great love.

The next day the coppers were removed from the eyes of the children, as Molly had anticipated. Giuseppe had received the letter.

TROUSERS

WE called him "Trousers" — "Little Trousers."

His Christian name was Michael. He was six years old, and he was a charter member of the Bennett Street Club.

The garment from which he took his name might as well have been a petticoat for any sign it gave of forking. It was hardly larger than a soup-plate, and was as convex before as behind — and that is saying a great deal.

One day he refused to "march" with the other children of the Club. Nothing could draw him from his chair.

At last the reason came out. He was afraid his "pants" would drop off. No wonder!

They were puckered at the band into a huge rosette, and fastened to the shirt-waist, his only other garment, by a single safety-pin. This was the day he was rechristened "Trousers."

His head was much too large for his body.

His face had a terrible gravity, and his eyes a profound concern, as if the whole wicked world were his sole charge, and had been for a century. His ideas of decorum were so strict that he stayed away from the Club two successive weeks on account of the death of a distant relative.

Before the Bennett Street Club was started I often noticed him in front of my house, and was struck by his preternaturally solemn demeanor. I never saw him play with other children. He was apt to be sifting the dust of the gutter or dredging a puddle with his fingers.

When he was lucky enough to get, by his winnowing and dredging, a bit of apple or cake, or a cigarette stub, he showed a proper stoicism. For all that, he invariably quit work and celebrated decorously by promenading up and down the length of the sidewalk. With a fine sense of values, he cared more for literature than for provender, as was shown by his pompous manner the day he extracted a learned pamphlet from our ash-barrel. But by far the greatest event of his career, previous to joining the Bennett Street Club, was the fishing of a red whistle from under the grating of a drain. Not that this elicited any mirth or betrayed him into a noisy demonstration of any kind. He

merely promenaded a full hour longer than he ever did before, softly blowing the whistle the while.

In the Club I tried everything to make him laugh — showed him funny pictures, filled his hands with candies, carried him on my shoulders, tossed him in the air — without visibly affecting him. He calmly received all as his natural due, gave no sign of pleasure, and spoke no word of thanks. His reticence was in no way due to childish shyness; it was rather a mature dignity. Trousers was a victim of premature old age, and this was one of the plainest signs of it.

Somehow, I won Trousers' allegiance. He followed me everywhere like a dog, and when he was ordered to halt he would send his eyes wistfully after me, just as a dog does who has been made to "charge" against his will.

Trousers' father has long been dead. Last winter his mother was so badly bruised in a drunken row that she had to be taken to the hospital. This left Trousers all alone. So I set up a crib in my back office — I am an M.D. — and had him to live with me.

This went on for several weeks, during which Trousers' great, devoted eyes watched my every movement so closely that he came to know all the secrets of my room, among

other things where I kept my money. I often charged him to tell no tales, and he as often nodded.

There came a night when I was roused from a sound sleep to attend a patient in Queen Street, who was said to be dying. I hurried away, leaving Trousers in charge of the office. It was the first time I had left him alone after dark, and I had some misgivings. Not he; he seemed eager to stand guard, as he had often done in the daytime. Besides, it would be troublesome to have him with me.

Arrived in Queen Street, I was surprised to learn that my patient was doing well and had not sent for me. This naturally gave me an uncomfortable suspicion that something was wrong, and when I got to my street door and found it ajar, suspicion was quickly turned to real alarm. The front office looked as if it were undergoing a spring cleaning, and the back office was in an even worse condition. Trousers was on the floor unconscious, and there was blood beside him.

As I lifted the little fellow in my arms he half opened his eyes to murmur, "I didn't tell one word, did I, Doctor?" Then he swooned. His left arm was limp and bleeding, and I found upon examination it had been shattered by a bullet.

When the wound was dressed, and Trousers was himself again, he told me what had happened, in his own laconic way.

It seems that I had hardly got out of the room when two men entered. One began ransacking my desk while the other laid hold of Trousers and demanded where I kept my money. To this demand, many times repeated, Trousers answered not a word. The inquisitor, exasperated by Trousers' solemn silence, wishing to intimidate, but hardly to do murder, drew a pistol and shot him in the arm. Still Trousers answered not a word, and the burglar, cursing him for a deaf-mute, took to rummaging, like his companion. They found little of value, and after a while went out.

Carlyle has told of "the great invaluable talent of silence." Trousers, my little hero, had this talent in a remarkable degree. His "ineloquence," fortified by his devotion, had saved me a great loss.

HEROISM UP TO DATE

AMONG the steerage passengers of the westward bound White Star liner "Majestic," three years back, were a pale, slender, blue-eyed man, his wife, and six children. There was a Quixotic something in the face of the man that would of itself have differentiated him from his fellows of the steerage, had not the neatness of his clothes and the gentlemanliness of his demeanor been sufficient to do so. Plainly he was a man of tastes and ideals, of enthusiasm and refinement. The wife was a fair-haired, buxom woman, practical and motherly, loyally indulgent of her husband's tastes and enthusiasms, that was easy to see, but not partaking of them. The children, whatever of intellectual equipment they may or may not have received from the father, had inherited the physical vigor and beauty of the mother; they were all, like her, plump, rosy-cheeked and fair-haired, — a beautiful group to look upon.

The dreamy-eyed man spent most of his time making water-color sketches, — now of the sea and sky and now of the steerage officials, — thereby securing for his family many precious little privileges of food and quarters; how precious, only one who has experienced the discomforts of steerage travel can understand.

The family easily passed inspection at the Ellis Island Immigrant Station: "Heinrich Fellner, German, lithographic artist, thirty-five years old, is married, and has his wife and six children with him. His last residence was London, England, and his destination is New York. He has no relatives in America. He paid his own passage and that of his family, and has $55 in money. He is not a polygamist or a contract laborer, has never been in a prison or almshouse, or supported by charity."

Such was the formal record of the head of the family on the books of the Ellis Island registry clerk. So much was enough for the United States government to know; the reader, to appreciate the sequel, must know more.

Heinrich Fellner was born and brought up in the university town of Leipzig. In due time, he entered the University, but soon withdrew, it being his dominant ambition to

become a painter, an ambition which still survives. His father, willing enough he should paint as a pastime, but determined he should have some other means of earning a living, apprenticed him to a lithographer. At twenty-three, Heinrich married Hilda Weith, for love, and during seven years thereafter he worked steadily at his trade. He was a good workman and managed to support a constantly increasing family; but his heart was heavy, inasmuch as he had not a moment of daylight to devote to his beloved painting; and he saw no likelihood that he would have. In spite of his heavy heart, he might have lived on thus till now in Leipzig, had not an old friend and fellow apprentice come thither on a visit from London with extraordinary accounts of the wages paid to English lithographers. Impressionable Heinrich was fired with desire for this better land. With such wages he might yet become a painter, since he would be able to lay by a great deal of money, and, with money laid by, he could afford to take the risks of art.

So he and his family went to London. Wages were higher there, but so was the cost of living, and the children continued to come. After five years in London, Heinrich was no nearer a bank account and little nearer his

art than he had been in Leipzig. But there was America still! Why not try America? It was rumored in the trade that skilful lithographers were very scarce there, and that wages were correspondingly high. Yes, he would go to America. And then — what pictures he would paint!

Patient Hilda, not being endowed with Heinrich's inflammable imagination, did not share his extravagant hopes of America, but she was willing to follow him anywhere, — to America, to the end of the world, if need be, — for she realized, better even than Heinrich himself, that he would have been ere then a painter had he not burdened himself with the cares of a family by marrying her. So they set out on the "Majestic" — father, mother, and six children — in quest of the gold that was to liberate to art the soul enslaved to bread and butter.

Scarcely had the Fellners escaped entirely from United States government control — scarcely, that is, had they disembarked from the immigrant ferry-boat "Shackamaxon," and passed through the barge-office gate — when they were accosted by a well-dressed, benevolent-eyed man, of middle age, who, in one and the same breath, warned them against boarding-house sharpers and offered to take them — it would not be so very much out of

his way — to a good boarding-house where they would be safe and comfortable till they could find a tenement. He would guarantee the whole eight of them food and lodging for two dollars a day; he knew the proprietor and would make the bargain for them, so there could not possibly be any mistake.

They were only too glad to avail themselves of the polite stranger's kindness, and allowed him to escort them to a house on Greenwich Street, where he loudly commended them to the kind offices of the landlord and disappeared. The house was dilapidated and dirty, almost disreputable, but the Fellners were grateful enough for any kind of a place to rest in and collect their scattered senses. That they had been victimized it did not occur to them to suspect until the next forenoon, when the proprietor, disclaiming all reponsibility for the representations of the benevolent gentleman, demanded fifteen dollars in payment of their entertainment for the first twenty-four hours. Heinrich was so far disillusionized and disgusted by this circumstance, as well as by the dirt, noise, and brutality of so much of the city as he had seen, that he changed his mind about settling in New York, and, without even looking for employment, bought

second-class passage for himself and family on that night's Fall River boat to Boston.

Made shy of boarding-houses by the New York mishap, he went to look for a tenement as soon as the boat-train arrived, leaving his family in the station. The fifty-five dollars of cash assets being by this time reduced to twenty, the necessity for cheap accommodations was too peremptory to be trifled with. So he engaged a single basement room on Carver Street at a dollar a week; and before noon, having bought such household utensils as were absolutely indispensable at a Pleasant Street junk-shop, he had installed the family therein. Thus the Fellners began their life in the land of fair promise, cooking, eating, and sleeping, eight of them, in a single room, and that room in the basement of a dirty tenement-house, full, as it turned out, of brutal, brawling, drunken tenants.

The next day Heinrich set out with his samples under his arm to search for work. Every day thereafter, for two weeks, he did the same, the only encouragement vouchsafed him during that time being one partial promise for an indefinite future. The third week he was taken on at a fair wage by a suburban company. Thinking his troubles thus quickly ended, he transferred his family at once from their basement to a three-room

second-story tenement across the street. Unfortunately, the orders the company were counting on did not come in as expected; the work only lasted a fortnight. So the Fellners were forced back to their basement before they were well out of it. A month of idleness followed, with only the two weeks' wages to live on. Then — Fortune delights in such extravagancies — two good offers came the same day: one from the city itself, the other from Cambridge. The Boston firm promised the higher wages, the Cambridge firm the steadier employment. The latter prevailed.

The Fellners fled from the miserable Carver Street cellar to a little house in Cambridge which had five rooms, a front lawn, and a back garden. The children were put to school and Sunday school. Hilda found respectable neighbors to sew and gossip with, and Heinrich went sketching, Sundays, with a congenial fellow-workman named John Kingman. Heinrich, mercurial fellow that he was, was beside himself with joy. Over and over he blessed the hour he decided to come to America. Day after day he brought out his old artistic ambition and fondled it. He was more than happy — radiant — for just six months. Then he was out of work again. His company had closed its shops for good.

Once more he began the search for work, and, though equipped this time with a capital recommendation from his last employer, he canvassed every lithographic concern, great and small, in Boston and vicinity without result. It was the dull season. He might as well have appealed to the tree-tops. Here and there he met with brutal rebuffs that hurt his proud and sensitive spirit cruelly. At the end of two months, during which he earned only ten dollars altogether (for a batch of newspaper illustrations), not only was every cent of savings gone, but the family were running behind in their rent at the rate of four dollars a week, and were forced to ask credit from the butcher and the grocer. Heinrich haunted publishers' offices in the hope of obtaining work as an illustrator, made caricatures and sent them as ventures to the comic weeklies, even tried to market some paintings. All to no purpose.

Finally, when he was on the verge of despair, he was engaged by a wall-paper firm to do designing at ten dollars a week, replacing, though he was quite ignorant of that at the time, a twenty-dollar man who had refused to submit to a cut-down. It was the briefest respite. In three weeks he was himself replaced by a young architectural student, who was willing to work at six dollars a week

for the sake of staying in town through his long vacation.

Heinrich next went to New York on the proceeds of the designing. There his own trade was as hopeless as in Boston, but he got hold of some piece-work for a crayon-portrait concern that enabled him to send regular remittances to his family. This concern soon proved to be little better than a swindle, and it melted completely out of sight one fine morning, heavily in debt to many of its employees, Heinrich among them. About the same time Heinrich succumbed to a severe attack of the "grip." Somehow, though he was more dead than alive, he managed to get back to Cambridge, where, at last, his pride so far gave way that he confided his exact condition, hitherto concealed, to his whilom sketching companion, John Kingman. Kingman forced him to accept a small loan for his immediate needs, and, further, advised him to send applications, enclosing samples of his work, to the principal lithographic concerns in the West. This course resulted in an offer from Chicago, of which another loan from Kingman enabled him to take advantage.

It was in July, 1895, that Heinrich went to Chicago. The following letter to his benefactor, Kingman, will supply the balance of Heinrich's story:

33 FORSYTH ST., NEW YORK,
16 July, 1896.

MY DEAR MR. KINGMAN: — You want to know how we are doing, wel we had very bad tymes indeed. I will explane as good as possible. For some whiles after I got at Chicago, all thing goes very right. I support myself at Chicago and my famile at Cambridge. Also I pay the rent what was behind rent and all else what I did owe at Cambridge. Then a little longer after that I did pay those debt, about October last years, I had a privat intervew whith my employer, wether my work is satisfactory and if I could get my famile at Chicago. I desire so bad my wife and my shildren those three months I was gone at Chicago by myself! Wel he tole me how he is highle plesed and I can have a pirminent position, and wy didn't I got my famile to there long ago. I thought this was about good enough to go ahead. So on the end of October, because I had save up to cover the expense which come very heavy I fetch my famile at Chicago to myself.

Now the truble begun. First my little boy Karl took sick. He got the diphtheria so much bad that we had to get an spesilist for the intubation and that took a very much money. Wel some time he got better and is now very wel already. I dont value it wether it is three times more money as we spent to so get him wel. Wel, wen we thought my dear poor Karl will sure die before he was outside the danger, my employer took me at his office and tole to me how he has to reduce my salary as competition was so big; wel my opinion is that such a action is to bad, four weeks behind he is very plesed and now so. Now I understood how he has been so eger to get my famile to there so he could cut down my pay and I would have to submit, spesily wen my Karl is so near to die and I have to buy a spesilist to save him if it is possible he might not die. I would not have believe my dear Mr. Kingman, a human person can be so despisable, but now I have seen him I have believe and I know it.

The very nex day, just wen I would have to tell to my employer, " yes my boy is so much sick and I have so my money used, I got to stay whith you for the salary what you say is the best you can do"; as it did happen a offer was made at me from New York to a place I tried for last years. I preferd better to stay at Chicago as to go to New York what always brought me bad luck, if so my employer had not been so mean to take advantag of my famile being whith me and my Karl like to die; but whith those circumstance so as I have tole you, I come to hear so soon wen it is safe to leave my boy, begin December last years. My position hear is a very wel one as I am employed by the Nonpareil Lithographic Company, the which you have the reputation of.

You do know how that I have kep of the Union free since I been in America. In England I alway belong to the Union, but I did say to myself wen I did come to America " America is not the same like England. In America they are plenty work for every man and plenty wages and an Union is not in need at all." You yourself did not so think like me. I have better knowledg already now myself. I did have wrong to talk like so and act like so but I got my hardest punishment wen that employer to Chicago was mean at me in what way he would have been frighten to treat a Union man. The first day I got at New York, I joined whith the International Lithographic Artists' and Engravers' Insurance and Protective Association of the U.S. and Canada already befor ever I was ask. Then, pretty quick, I fetch my wife and shildren on to hear but I had not enough money to fetch our goods whith them. So we had to give them in storage. Pretty quick again we had send the money for the storage of our goods and it did look so as we would be in comfort, wen the very nex week a strike was declare by the Union. I will as good as I can give you all the details of that strike. Our demands have been 44 hours a week insted 48 work time, no piece work, littlest pay $18

by a week, overtime payd for as time and half, who would wish to be a apprentice would have to serve four years by contrakct, and must not be taken on without he show befor six months is done so much ability that he may be a good lithographic artist.

Those are our demands, and our union had present those to the employers at February 15, expecting a anser at February 28. But at February 28 no anser did come. Every other employers in the United States and Canada had give in the demands, the time was up for any decision and not a anser. Wel, so as our dear employers did feel to fine to notice of us at all, we got up a big and well-attended meeting in a hall where we one and all did vote the strike a absolute necessary, and so every man had to leav off his work and so did most willingly. Wel on the following Monday not one man went back to work, so you see how much the man were all at one mind.

The strike was declare at the first of March and at the fourth my boy Wilhelm got Diphtheria, four days later he got Scarlet Fever by addition to it, and at the seventeen of March he died and at the fifteen my wife have a little girl baby. I had to do as good as possible myself tending after Wilhelm my wife being in that condition. But a man is not the same like a woman to tend after those sick shildren, and I cannot keep my thought back how Wilhelm my oldest and best-loved boy might have got better the same way whith Karl if his mother has tended after him, or if I could have hire a gentle woman to watch him constant. But the doctor say, "No, Mr. Fellner, that make no difference, Wilhelm have to die anyhow, all the same." Wel, I try to believe of him what he say about Wilhelm. I am much sure that you can wel enough immagin yourself how our physical condition is and spesial has been; it was terrible we could not take it for sure that we have lost him forever, but so it is and I hope time will bring my wife and myself over it. But please do give me pardon my dear Mr. Kingman, I did not have intention

to say to you about my wife's and myself's sad feelings, but only to say the things what have happen.

I commence again about the strike. It has been one glorious strike. It was a wonder thing how the man hold out. All that time while the strike stay on only 51 man took weak and went back at work. From 500 lithographic artist at New York only 51 cannot do it all and that the employers did their possible to crush us you may know sure.

The menager of my shop come at my house four time and make first-class offers and expressily he took a great advantag of the truble in my famile. The first time he coax at me to come back, the nex time he did his possible to give me fear. Another time he did offer a five dollar more by a week. Another time wen was that very day my Wilhelm lie dead and my wife lie sick whith her new girl baby, he has offered that same five dollars by adition and has held out to my hand some many dollars in advance to pay the expense of Wilhelm's funeral, which I must say does cost unreasonable high in this country, when I need so much that money for the alive ones. It was much tempting but I did have to refuse it. I have not sorrow that I did refuse. Had I accept I would now be in very good circumstance, but I could not bring my action together whith my honor. Perhaps I did foolish to send that menager away under my terrible circumstance, such as I do hope never to be under again. Some day I do not really know, but I cannot think to do foolish so in holding out for a man's honor.

After we did not go back at work for five week, the employers say to us to come back at work and after, settle thinks by arbitration, which we did refuse, but made them a offer, that is if they will sign a contrakct made up by a very clever Solicitor, who as well has take great interest in Laber question, then we will come back. Those artickle had been a regular masterpiece and the employers did not like them in any way, but they had to sign and so did on the end of a good fight.

A arbitration comitee of two man on each side had to settle thinks in two week and if they cannot come at a settlement, our demands should be put into the hand of the Episcopal Bishop and his decision should settle the truble no matter in hows faver it will be. That comitee should also settle every further truble during the time of one year and so long while as those employers and those employees do so ackt according to those artickles they will be no more strike. That Episcopal Bishop agree to all those our demands only the 44 hours he did not agree to.

The loss was very great on both side, but it has been a absolute necessary to protect us unless we will be lower than the most common laborer is to-day. I can say to you it is worth fighting for. A good many man had not been taken back, but I was fortunately replaiced at my old position. Now, Mr. Kingman you have a smal record of our past. I hope that the future will bring better tymes than those last months and I hope to paint soon some day those great picture I tole you about I had in mind long ago to paint. So far we are quite happy.

Wishing you are so very wel and prosperus like you do deserve, I remane with best complements,

Yours truly

HEINRICH FELLNER.

EPISODES IN THE CAREER OF SHUFFLES, A LODGING-HOUSE BUM

BOYHOOD.

THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD Jack Wilson was not "Shuffles," and he was not a "lodging-house bum." Of course not. He was just lean, ragged, dirty-faced, bright-eyed Jack Wilson, of Cranberry Alley,— one of the wildest, wickedest, wretchedest tenement nests in the whole city of Boston. But Jack Wilson had it in him to be both. There are great possibilities in a bright-eyed thirteen-year-old boy. Only they must have time and right circumstances to develop. For the present, then, please be patient. How Jack Wilson became "Shuffles," and how he became a "lodging-house bum," will be clear in due time.

Jack must appear first as hero, next as knave, and then — well, we shall see.

Hero.

By the time-honored laws of romance a hero must have a pedigree. Jack shall have one, never fear; the time-honored laws of romance may not be ignored, but it must of necessity be brief.

John (or Jack) Wilson was the sixth child and the second son of Thomas Wilson and of Mary Ann Wilson *née* McFee.

There you have it, such as it is, and that is all; for of the parentage of Jack's parents (Thomas Wilson and Mary Ann Wilson *née* McFee, interlopers in Cranberry Alley) Cranberry Alley knew nothing.

Thomas Wilson divided his time, rather impartially, between loafing, drinking, and faking cheap jewelry. Mary Ann Wilson *née* McFee divided hers between drinking, laundering, shamming illness before charity visitors, and giving birth to children; every fresh confinement being a fresh excuse for a touching appeal to generous pity, and every new child being easily trained into either a basket-beggar or an envoy to the churches and the charities, as soon as it was old enough to walk.

The spring before he was thirteen, Jack Wilson had been arrested and tried on a

charge of breaking and entering a hardware store to steal weapons. The charge had been proved, but he had been let off on probation in consideration of his tender years. This adventure distinguished him somewhat in the eyes of the boys of Cranberry Alley. It did not make him a hero. It was a very little thing that made Jack Wilson a hero. But before just that can be told a few other things must be.

The Cranberry Alley Dramatic Club had announced its third annual performance for the evening of Jan. 13, 18—. Of this club Jack Wilson was an honored member. Buster O'Toole, fifteen years old, was another member, who, up to that time, had been quite as much honored. He was, in fact, by virtue of superior age, size, wisdom, and accomplishments, the undisputed leader of "The Cranberries," as the Cranberry Alley boy gang was called. Buster, you understand, was "no slouch." He swam like a fish, had saved several boys from drowning, and, better still, had licked Booze O'Brien, the leader of the Sullivan Street gang, in a fair fight. Buster had just begun to "tog out." He wore tan shoes and a standing collar, washed his face regularly (so far as it could be done without turning sharp corners), and all that sort of thing. The reason for this change in Buster

was a tender sentiment for Bridget Mulcahey, the saucy, good-natured, rosy-cheeked, fourteen-year-old belle of the Alley.

Buster's elder brother, Tim, was an officer of the Fourth Regiment, whose drill-hall every boy of Cranberry Alley hoped some day to adorn. It was Buster's secret and consuming desire to do in a military way all that his brother Tim had done, and more.

Jack's military ambition was equally vaulting, and he, also, aspired to a first mortgage on the smiles of Bridget Mulcahey.

Buster's *rôle* in the play being that of a colonel, and Jack's that of a sergeant, each was bound to provide himself with a suitable uniform. Now Jack was (considering his age) a hard drinker, but for more than a month before the night set for the play he not only went without drinks, but also without cigarettes, chewing-tobacco, and theatre tickets. The keeper of an "old clo'" shop on Hanover Street had offered him an officer's coat resplendent with gilt epaulettes and brass buttons for a dollar and a half, and he had made up his mind to own that coat at any sacrifice. Every day, and many times a day, Jack went by the "old clo'" shop to make sure nothing was wrong, and every time he went by he counted his money. Jack never left his money at home. Every

cent of it was kept in his pockets; it did not overload them, and it was safer, considering the character of his parents. Once, when Jack was saving money for a pistol, Tom, his father, professing a sympathetic interest in his endeavor, made him a present of a bank. From this Tom managed to supply himself with drink-money for as much as six weeks before Jack, poor boy! detected the fraud. It was really Jack's disappointment over the pistol (although this fact did not come out in the trial) that had been the prime cause of his committing the hardware robbery. Tom had far better not have exhibited before so apt a pupil. Jack had come thereby to be more than a match for him in slyness, and had turned the tables on him several times by pilfering both his jewelry and his money.

. . . . . .

For the final dress rehearsal Buster's sister sewed braid and brass buttons on his Sunday jacket, until Buster was very proud of himself. He had a notion that, somehow, this dramatic appearance was to be a turning-point in his career. He would win the respect of the hitherto unappreciative Tim by his martial bearing, and infatuate Bridget with his fine clothes and brilliant stage business. Jack, his rival in her affections (whose only "dress" at this rehearsal consisted of a

rusty soldier-cap), wouldn't stand the ghost of a show beside him.

At eight o'clock, the time appointed for the rising of the curtain, the auditorium of the Cranberry Alley Dramatic Club, viz., O'Hooligan's cellar, was packed with the friends and relatives of the members; but the curtain did not rise. What was worse, there was no certainty it would ever rise. There was trouble in the "green room." Everybody there was talking at once. The leading lady, Swipes O'Connor, had even forgotten to be depressed by his heavy copper-colored chignon and his elaborate draperies — to the imminent peril of both.

The reason?

Jack's hard-earned store-coat, far more splendid than Buster's home-made one, had filled Buster's soul with envy, and he had flatly refused to perform. He had stated his case clearly enough. "Ain't I higher up'n him, an' hadn't he orter have a poorer uniform'n me? What'll Tim think ter see a sargint togged out that a way, an' me a kernel wid these fake clothes on? No fool sargint never wore no coat like that. They'll take us fer a pack o' kids. He wouldn't be let ter do it in no reel theayter."

At 8.15 the audience was impatient to the degree of stampings and cat-calls.

At 8.30 it was furious. O'Hooligan's house seemed ready to fall; the very underpinning trembled.

In the "green room," too, things had grown worse. Buster was taking off his despised coat. He was going home, and the play might "go to the Devil" for all of him. Buster was plainly ignoring the honor of the Cranberry Alley Dramatic Club; and that, not because he loved honor and the club less, but because he loved Bridget Mulcahey and Tim's good opinion more.

There was only one way to save the honor of the club. Jack Wilson took that way, and that is why Jack Wilson was a hero.

Marcus Curtius' sacrificial leap into the gaping earth was not a finer moral spectacle. With the reckless bravado which had astounded everybody at his trial, Jack drawled out:

"Let 'im have the damned coat ef he's snide enough ter make a kick! W'at do I care how I look! Youse has worked like suckers on this show, an' youse ain't goin' ter be faked out o' givin' it! Not by a damned sight!"

The tears which, to Jack's disgust, filled his eyes a minute later were quickly transferred to his shirt-sleeves — he would not for the world have disgraced the precious purchase with them — and the coats were exchanged.

The music (two harmonicas and a drum) struck up, the curtain rose, and the play was given — with much *verve*. Jack, warm of soul from his hard struggle with himself, did nobly. Bridget told him afterwards she "liked his actin' fine," and Tim said a good word for his soldiering.

Swipes O'Connor's uncle, who was a compositor on the "Post," persuaded its dramatic editor to insert a brief notice of the performance. The notice ended thus:

"The acting of Master John Wilson deserves especial commendation."

The next day Jack refused flatly to do a begging errand for his father, and Tom, either awed or made tender by the pride he felt in his boy's fame, neglected, for the first time on record, to thrash him for disobedience.

Knave.

You have beheld Jack Wilson as hero: behold him now as knave.

Jack left school just as soon as the law allowed. Thereupon Fate and his father conspired to force him to the choice of a profession. Jack held off as long as possible. But when it became reasonably clear to him that work of some kind was inevitable, his weakness for uniforms made him choose to join the telegraph-messenger force; the

police force and the fire department, to either of which he would much have preferred to be attached, being quite too far beyond his reach to be thought of. Soon after he began work, he took part in the messenger boys' strike, as one of the picked band that did the doughty service (cutting wires along the roofs and "clubbing" scabs with banana butts collected from the dumps) which helped so much to bring the strike to a successful issue.

One day — it was about a year after he had donned the Western Union uniform — Jack was going through Newspaper Row with a message, when he ran plump into Buster O'Toole. Now Buster had considered it his duty to give Jack a sound drubbing after the flurry in the Cranberry Alley Dramatic Club. This was not because he harbored any personal spite, but just by way of discipline, Jack having been guilty of language disrespectful to the leader of "The Cranberries." The drubbing given and taken, Jack and Buster, with the boyish magnanimity which, rightly directed, develops into the truest manliness, had then and there agreed to call the whole thing quits, and had been the best of good friends ever since. Buster, who had an indulgent father, had managed, by hook and by crook, to elude, so

far, the necessity of succumbing to work; he was still a person of leisure, and as such the envy and despair of Jack, who would fain have been another.

At the particular moment of this *rencontre* Buster was on his way to the Fitchburg Railroad station, to take the train for the Clan-na-Gael picnic at Lake Walden, Tim having turned over to him, at the last minute, a ticket which he had found himself unable to use. It so chanced that Buster wanted company, — leisure is apt to induce loneliness, — wanted it very much indeed; so much that he offered Jack what spending-money he had in his pocket if he would go to Lake Walden with him. Without an instant's hesitation Jack tore up the undelivered message, made Buster sign for it in the book, and gave him his hand in token of acceptance; although he had not a copper himself, and all Buster had lacked ten cents of being enough to pay the car-fare one way.

The deficit could and must be made up at once. Getting to the picnic was the important thing; as for getting back, that would somehow take care of itself. But for one thing, Jack would have assumed the whine he had been trained to as a child, and begged the money. His uniform was a theoretical as well as a practical hindrance to that. On

the one hand, a liveried employee would be slow to excite the pity that sheds dimes; on the other, the beautiful regalia could not be disgraced by begging. Under the circumstances it would be easier, quicker, neater, more becoming, better every way, to steal the dime, or rather "pinch the dime," for that, by a curious refinement of language, was the way Jack put it to himself.

So, being as little a novice in the "pinching" as in the begging art, he jumped on a crowded car, asked the conductor a civil question, "pinched" a dime while asking it (from the change pocket of one of the platform passengers), and rejoined Buster, almost before the latter, who was far slower of thought and movement, was more than half aware that he had left him.

At the picnic, Jack managed to hoodwink the commissary department into providing him, gratis, with a superb dinner, as a member of the band, thanks to his uniform; and, thanks to the same uniform and its rapid transferral to Buster in a bath-house, Buster managed to have a superb dinner too. The ingenious devices by which the knavish pair managed to get for themselves everything else going, that seemed to them really worth while, cannot be elaborated here; they were all quite of a piece with the capture of the dinner.

Altogether, it was a day of intellectual triumphs, a glorious day for Jack and Buster. But glorious days, alas! are exactly like other days in this, that they are only twenty-four hours long. There is always a last train. For Jack of the empty pocket this train involved a rather serious problem, — the problem of getting home "without money and without price." When he boarded the train he had found no solution for the problem. But he had enormous faith in Fortune; he knew that somehow he would find one. Now Fortune — it is a notorious fact — more often than not stands by those who recklessly trust Her. She stood by Jack in this emergency. Barely was he seated, indeed, when She sent an idea his way. Not more quickly does a wary toad seize, with unerring tongue, the fly that ventures across his track, and swallow it, than Jack seized the idea Fortune sent his way, and acted on it.

He rose, made his way to the toilet-room at the end of the car, entered and locked himself in. The conductor, in taking up the tickets a few minutes later, tried the door, according to his custom. "My husband's got my ticket; he's in the rear car," came from behind the door, in a shrill, woman's voice — a beautiful piece of mimicry on the part of Jack! The conductor went on. And

by the time he was well into the next car (which chanced to be the rear one) Jack had slipped back into his place beside Buster. Safe at last! though he came within an ace of detection three minutes later, through his own and Buster's immoderate laughter over the puzzled expression of the conductor as he passed through the car on his return.

Thus Fortune had subtly signalled Jack for trumps. Jack had instantly recognized the signal, played a high face-card and won the trick. What an exquisite delight for Fortune (whose signals are usually unnoticed or misapprehended, through sheer crassness of wit) to have a signal understood and responded to with such cleverness and alacrity!

But Fortune did not, for all his quickness and cleverness, make a permanent favorite of Jack. Fickle in this instance, as reputation makes Her always, She had exalted Jack Wilson only to the more abase him. The message he had failed to deliver was one of great importance, and he found himself confronted next morning at the office by irate Mr. William Bull, of the Stock Exchange, to whom it should have gone. Mr. Bull swore it had not been delivered. Jack, with an audacious *aplomb* worthy an issue of nothing less than international importance, swore that it had been delivered, offering his receipt-

book in proof. He further asserted that he had delivered it to Mr. Bull himself, at a great sacrifice of personal comfort, for he had been obliged to go home sick immediately after and stay there, in bed, the rest of the day. The word of a messenger boy could not be considered for an instant against the word of Mr. William Bull, the successful stockbroker. Without so much as an attempt at a verification of the signature, or other investigation, Jack was ordered to take off his uniform and quit the service.

"Oh, but I was tough!" Jack was describing the occurrence to Buster an hour after. "I tore the braid off me coat raight there in the eyes of the boss. 'Take your damned old blue raigs,' I sez, 'an' to hell wid 'em.' An' you'd jest orter seen the way I walked out a-spittin' me quid on his carpet. Oh, but I was tough!"

By night of that same day, Jack's bravado had left him. After all, he was nothing but a boy. Before he went to sleep that night, he wept bitterly. It was not the loss of his job that hurt him so, but the loss of the glory of the uniform.

Hero and knave! With such strands of evil and of good, Jack Wilson had begun the weaving of the web of his career.

IN LOVE.

JACK'S early weakness for little Bridget Mulcahey did not turn out to be a serious love-affair. Having basked in Bridget's smiles for three months or so after the performance of the play, he turned away to bask in the smiles, first of Buster's sister, Jennie O'Toole, and then of other maidens. What better was to be expected of the vagrant fancy of a wanton thirteen-year-old?

Jack's first real love-affair did not come till he was twenty. It began soon after he started going to Professor Whitehead's assemblies, and it ended — soon enough. You who know life at all know the likelihood of that.

Professor Whitehead's assemblies were given on the top floor of a Hanover Street block every Saturday night from eight to twelve, "Admission, gents twenty-five cents, ladies fifteen." Professor Whitehead's Saturday-night assemblies were then, and for many years had been (saloons and theatres only excepted), the greatest resource of Cranberry Alley. Very likely they are still, if Professor Whitehead survives and his assemblies continue to be held. It is a curious circumstance that Cranberry Alley girl-children danced

almost as soon as they walked. Indeed, it was claimed that during the nondescript age in which boys and girls look exactly alike, dancing was the surest test of sex; and there were rumors of girl-babies who danced long before they walked. These may have been fond mothers' fables not to be too literally taken. Even so, the fact that fond mothers were at the pains to invent such fables shows the high esteem in which Cranberry Alley held the terpsichorean art.

Whatever the exact dancing-age may have been, it is safe enough to say that Cranberry Alley girls danced very young, and danced very well very young. If you had gone through the Alley in those days, in the wake of a German band or a hurdy-gurdy, a hand-organ or a bagpipe, you could not have retained a particle of scepticism on this point; for you would have seen them — girls of all shapes, complexions, sizes, and ages, dancing in the middle of the street, on the sidewalks, in the yards (such tiny yards as there were), even on the palisaded roofs.

Most of these girls attended, or were sure, when they arrived at the period of long dresses, to attend, Professor Whitehead's dancing-classes, as well as his assemblies. They did not go to the classes because they needed to learn to dance (in the way of steps they could

undoubtedly have taught Professor Whitehead more than he could teach them): they went because, forsooth, it was the mode to go, and because they wished to learn an indefinable something they chose to call — God save the mark! — "the etiquette of the ballroom."

The Cranberry Alley boys, when they arrived at the whisker period, attended the same classes and assemblies. They *did* need to learn the ordinary dance-steps, however expert they might be in clog dancing. They went for that purpose; also for the "ballroom etiquette" aforesaid; also, and most of all, they went because the girls did, wishing to be where the girls were. Those went, that is to say, who had passed quite through their woman-hating period; and before the whisker stage was much advanced, most of them had. For Cranberry Alley males were normal males in this, that they were subject to attacks, more or less protracted, of despising women. Jack's woman-hating period came on just about as his voice changed; at fifteen, he loathed womankind. At that time Buster, who had likewise had his turn basking in the smiles of Bridget Mulcahey, loathed womankind also. It wouldn't do for a fellow who was a brave wrestler, boxer, runner, swimmer, jumper, smoker, drinker, or clog-dancer,

or all of them combined, to waste valuable time displaying his accomplishments before women — creatures who were by their nature and by their training totally unfitted to appreciate them. That, at any rate, was exactly Buster's attitude on the subject, though he did not express it in just those words. Buster's way of putting it was equally comprehensive and far more forcible and succinct. "Women be damned," he said; "I hain't got no use fer 'em." Buster himself had said it; so "Women be damned" echoed each and every loyal Cranberry to whom the word of Buster was still law.

It was Buster himself, though, who was the first, in spite of his strong language, to violate the law by attending the Whitehead assembly; and one by one the older Cranberries followed suit. Jack, as the youngest, was naturally the last to succumb to the temptation; but a Saturday night came when every mother's son of the Cranberries was at the assembly.

This total surrender meant that the Cranberries, their woman-hating period having passed, had adopted a new code. It did mean that, of course, but it meant far more. It meant that a radical change had come over the spirits of the gang; that the sexual instinct had, in the course of nature, triumphed over the purely social instinct; that love (at

once the most exacting and the most satisfying of emotions while it lasts, even if it does not in every instance last long) had driven out friendship. And that meant — alas and alack! — the utter annihilation of the corporate existence of the Cranberries, for good-fellowship never yet permanently resisted the intrusion of the petticoat. How strong the new motive waxed within them, judge by the fact that sundry moon-struck Cranberries cut down their beer supply by five glasses a week for several consecutive weeks, in order to make sure of having the needful quarters of a Saturday night.

What a sight! — those overgrown, oily-haired, red-faced, awkward, steaming fellows, shambling, shuffling, hopping, stumbling, bumping, and thumping through waltz, schottische, polka, and all the rest, with no notion at all of step or time, and of grace as little as a running cow! And all the while under the fond delusion they were dancing divinely and were guiding the "poor girls" through mazes that would otherwise have been thridless, when, in reality, nothing but the tact, agility, and deftness of these same "poor girls" prevented a general collision and dreadful cataclysm! And the precious ball-room etiquette! — what a marvellous compilation! All mutterings, stutterings, smirkings, and

grimaces; angles where should have been semicircles; semicircles where should have been compound curves; amiability where should have been dignity; and dignity where should have been grace!

The young men and young women of Cranberry Alley were not Professor Whitehead's only patrons. Had they been, Jack Wilson might not have met his fate at the Saturday-night assembly, and in that case this narrative would never have been written; for there was not a girl in all Cranberry Alley with whom Jack Wilson could not have waltzed, by the hour, without an emotional flutter. Flutter Jack did, though, like a frightened bird, the very first time his arm encircled the waist of pretty little Annie Elliot, of Liberty Court, and flutter he did many times that night and many nights thereafter under the shock of her presence.

Now Cranberry Alley had an exasperating but remarkable faculty for being cock-sure of things, which other less intuitive localities would have only vaguely suspected. So it was that Cranberry Alley knew beyond the possibility of cavil that Jack Wilson was going to marry Annie Elliot, of Liberty Court, a considerable time before Jack Wilson knew it himself. Cranberry Alley was never reticent regarding the things it was cock-sure

of; and it is more than likely that it was its cock-sureness, helped out by its lack of reticence, that first revealed to Jack Wilson the actual state of his affections.

Not by any means satisfied with seeing Annie once a week at the assemblies, though he danced with her three-fourths of all the numbers there, Jack, for the sake of having more of her society, had resorted to such gallantries (principally taking her to the theatre and cloying her with confectionery) as were current in the Alley. But it was not till he had heard the dictum of the Alley regarding their relation that he had begun to call on her, calling being with a young man of Jack's position and disposition almost equivalent to a declaration. Those interminable and embarrassing evenings on the uncomfortable chairs of the best room — who could describe them? There was so little to describe; Jack's *savoir-faire* in the trying situation being not much, if any, beyond that of the "amorous swain" Robert Louis Stevenson tells of, who "liked it well enough as long as her sisters were there," but who "didn't know what to do when they were alone."

Had Cranberry Alley divined less and held its tongue more, Jack might never have worked himself up to the calling point. He

might never even have discovered that he was in love. Assuredly he would not have discovered it so soon. But once Cranberry Alley had thus definitively coupled his name with the name of Annie Elliot, there was nothing left for him to do but to win her.

The winning of Annie Elliot was no such difficult task, though Jack's forebodings exaggerated it into a stupendous one. Annie was twenty-three, not precisely a *débutante*. She was ready, even eager, to marry, and had been for more than five years, during which she had received as many attentions as any of her set, but not a single *bona fide* offer. She was not in love with Jack, still she did not dislike him; it might as well be he as another, and it must be somebody. Her parents, who were getting tired of supporting her in elegant maidenly idleness, had threatened to make her go to work if she did not find a man very soon, and she could not afford to be fastidious.

Willing though she might be, Annie was too much of a woman to give Jack an inkling of her availability. Not for the world would she have let him believe her an easy prey. She carried herself in his presence, therefore, with a dashing look-out-or-you'll-lose-me air that unquestionably kept him on his mettle, though it as unquestionably kept him, poor

fellow! in a veritable tremor of apprehension.

When at last he got his courage up to the point of the proposal, Annie, who was quick to note it, pushed him into the affair and steered him through it with the same art concealing art that had enabled her to guide him through the waltz at the Whitehead assemblies. So featly, indeed, did she steer, that Jack, when he had her "yes" and corroborative embrace, actually believed he had won his victory against heavy, almost desperate, odds. "I thought I'd never get her ter say the word," he afterwards explained; "'twas as bad's tryin' ter get Booze O'Brien ter give in he's licked."

Such a victory demanded a celebration, of course. Jack celebrated so hard, with the co-operation of Buster (who had been in his complete confidence from the beginning of the affair), that he did not put in an appearance at Liberty Court for three whole days; and when he did appear he was a very badly battered lover.

Annie, during those three days, was so alarmed for fear her man had repented his declaration, and she had lost him after all her tactics, that she was positively hysterical.

Neither Jack nor Annie desired a long engagement. Six months, then, from the time

they first danced together at the Whitehead assembly, and one from the time of the plighting of their troth, all of Cranberry Alley and much of Liberty Court were dancing at their wedding.

And such a wedding! For ten weeks thereafter Cranberry Alley talked of nothing else. That it did not monopolize the Alley talk for a much longer period was due solely to the intervention of another wedding.

A FAMILY MAN.

As things go in Cranberry Alley, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Wilson's prospects were bright for a tranquil future. Though they had no money ahead, they had health, a good outfit of clothes, and a four-room tenement gaudily furnished on the instalment plan. Above all, Jack was just then drawing the highest wages of any man in the Alley. To explain this last, it is necessary to go back to a time preceding the wooing of Annie.

After Jack had lost his Western Union uniform, he had found other uniforms. He had been a buttons for a Back Bay physician, a bell-boy in a down-town hotel, and an usher at a variety theatre, in quick succession. In each and every capacity, however, he had incurred the wrath of the powers, by some exceptionally flagrant piece of bravado or neglect, and had been forced to doff his glory.

Turning, completely disenchanted, from show to substance, he had devoted more than a year to learning the carpenter's trade, a pathetic attempt at steadiness that had amounted to little or nothing. Bar-tending was far more in the line of his talent. This

was his next venture, and this it was that elevated him (through a happy combination of circumstances) to a position which made him quite as much the envy of Cranberry Alley as if he had been a policeman or a city employee.

It came about in this way: Jack was tending bar at Sheehan's, now Fennessey's, nearly opposite the H—— Theatre. It was shortly before Sheehan, who had not been greatly prospered, sold out to Fennessey, and he was trying to curtail expenses. He called Jack into his office not more than two months after he had entered his employ, and explained the situation to him. "I'm sorry, Jack; you've been a good hand and I have no fault to find," he concluded, "but you see yourself how it is. I've got to cut down my working-force somehow, and as you were the last man taken on you'll have to be the first to go. It's a case of the last shall be first," he added humorously, "and there's the warrant for that in the Holy Book, you know."

"All right, Boss," Jack responded; "it's jest as you say, of course. But 'tween me 'n' you I need work bad jest now; I'm a-hopin' ter get meself tied up soon (this was just after Jack had been accepted), an' it's a bit rough on a feller's goin' ter get married ter be

trun clean out of a job all to once. Can't yer manage ter drop me down kind of easy? Jest let me come in nights as an extry hand fer the theatre trade, till I find another place. If yer c'n manage ter hold me on that way fer a while, I'll be greatly obliged t'yer. 'Twill help me out like everything."

Sheehan, being a kind-hearted man and not long married himself, good-naturedly consented. More than that, he appealed to the councilman of his district in Jack's behalf, reminding him of a certain good turn which Jack had done him in a former city election. Councilman Mooney faithfully promised Sheehan to use his "inflooence" for Jack.

It was not long before Councilman Mooney, who never made idle promises, bethought himself that Polinski, the Jew merchant, who had managed to buy himself a nomination for State representative, was not only badly in need of service, but abundantly able to pay for it. He therefore summoned Jack and sent him to Polinski with a letter of introduction and recommendation. Polinski in turn, having decided that Jack was a valuable man for his purposes, after a brief parley with him, sent him with a sealed note to Rafferty, of Rafferty's saloon. "Begin work tending bar to-morrow morning," said Rafferty, after

reading Polinski's note. "Your pay will be twenty-one dollars. Come in a little while every forenoon (there's not much going then, you know), and stand up back of the bar with an apron on, just enough to show you work here. Give the rest of your time to the interests of Mr. Polinski. You understand," with a significant wink. "Collar your men and make them solid. You know what that means," with another wink. "Keep your eyes open, boy, and see to it nobody gets away from you. I know all about you, Jack. I've been watching you for some time. You're no fool and you're solid, and I'm willing to trust you as I would myself. I won't give you any orders just yet. Probably I shan't want to give you any. You've lived round here in Ward —— all your life, and you know the ground and how to work it better than I do. When you want to make things run smooth," still another wink, "drinks, cigars, dinners, all that sort of thing, — don't stand off for the expense. Ask for all the money you need; spend it just when you need it and where you need it, without waiting to see me. It'll be all right. There's twenty-five dollars for a starter. When that's gone just run to me for more. There's plenty where that came from. Polinski foots the bills, you know,"

with a tremendous parting wink and a hearty grasp of the hand.

It was while Jack was receiving his twenty-one dollars a week and controlling the distribution of a much larger sum that his marriage with Annie Elliot had been consummated.

Is it a wonder the wedding made a sensation? Is it a wonder the future looked bright, brilliant even? Is it a wonder that Cranberry Alley girls were as jealous of Annie, and as angry with Jack for having gone out of the Alley for a wife, as ever female parishioners were with a handsome young clergyman for having married outside his parish?

The Polinski campaign — always to Jack's mind the only campaign of any account in history — resulted in a victory for Mr. Polinski. His election cost him $30,000, according to Jack, who claimed to have inside information. Jack may have exaggerated by a few thousands the real amount. He may even have added a cipher, through a desire, natural enough, that an affair with which he was so intimately connected should appear as large as possible. At any rate, whatever the true figure of the expense of Polinski's campaign may have been, it was so large that Polinski gave up all thought of ever presenting himself again as a candidate for office.

Consequently, when the business of that

election had been closed up, neither Representative Polinski nor his lieutenant, Mr. Rafferty, had any further use for the services of Jack Wilson.

It was a rude awakening for Jack. The towering edifice of his ambition had collapsed, as every edifice that is builded on the shifting sand of politics is almost foredoomed to collapse.

> "Oh, how wretched
> Is that poor man that hangs on prince's favors!"

exclaimed Wolsey, the Lord Cardinal, when cast off by King Henry VIII.; and

> "Had I but served my God with half the zeal
> I served my king, he would not in mine age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies."

Jack Wilson, being a simple ward-heeler, was not up to such flights of rhetoric as a Lord Cardinal (though the situations were not dissimilar). He only succeeded in having a very lively row with Rafferty and in making the air of Rafferty's saloon very blue with oaths before he left it, solemnly vowing never to set foot in it again. And to the day of his death, as often as Jack thought of the buxom dollars he had allowed to slip through his fingers when he might have retained them,

he regretted bitterly his fidelity to the cause of Polinski.

Jack's naturally robust tendency toward conviviality was rendered even more robust by the free-handed treating of his campaign; furthermore, what little aptitude he had ever had for steady manual labor, his brilliant, if brief, political career dissipated. He was obliged, for all that, poor fellow! to turn again to carpentering after his political overthrow.

But really what was the use? He might as well have tried to earn a living painting *aquarelles*. He had so little carpentering skill to start with, he so often failed to come to his work at all, came so often drunk or tardy, was so often lagging, half-hearted, blundering, or insubordinate about it, that he could not keep his hold upon it.

When it had been taken from him, he humiliated himself as he had never humiliated himself before in his life. He appealed for help to Rafferty, in spite of his vow never to enter that shop again; and he did it all for the sake of Annie, bear that in mind. Rafferty, who took a keen delight in Jack's humiliation, would offer him nothing better than "slob work," and Jack could do nothing but accept it.

To wash the floor and scrub the bar of the very saloon where lately he had been a proud

politician! Think of it! A deposed king hired to apply silver polish to the throne on which he once sat regnant!

A few months after Jack took up the "slob work," Annie bore her first child. Jack was so elated by the appearance of a boy, instead of the girl certain of the old wives of Cranberry Alley had prophesied, that he indulged in a spree a whole week long. Rafferty, who had already winked at such peccadilloes as one and two day absences, — perfection is not demanded of a saloon scullion, — lost his patience at this; and Jack was deprived of even his "slob work" at the very moment when he could least afford to lose it.

Up to this time he had never absolutely refused to work, except for a day or so when (as in his telegraph-messenger service) work chanced to conflict with some more congenial opportunity. So, for a while after losing his "slob work," he looked after other employment faithfully enough. Unfortunately it was the dull season in carpentering, and he could not refer to Rafferty, his last saloon employer. When Jack, after weeks of honest search (during which he had been rewarded with only a few odd jobs about stables, wharves, and lumber-yards), found his clothes worn, his shoes broken, and himself generally seedy, and his small chances of work

getting smaller the seedier he grew, he decided that a man might as well fish for gold-pieces in a Cranberry Alley gutter, or expect to drink champagne out of Fennessey's schooners, as to try to get work when he was visibly "walking on his uppers;" and he gave up the struggle. Verily, the weariness of work is as nothing compared with the weariness of seeking work and finding none!

By this time Jack's home affairs also were in a bad tangle. The family had failed to meet the payments on the furniture, and piece by piece that had gone back to the dealers. They had gotten so far behind with their rent that they had been obliged to leave their four-room for a one-room tenement, and had had trouble in getting even that in the Alley, by reason of their low credit there. Had Annie been inclined to be helpful, she might have gone out to work; her neighbor, Mrs. Coleman, would gladly have minded the baby, Tommy (they had called him after Jack's father), in her absence. But Annie, who had married Jack more to escape work than on any other one account, had no notion of doing a thing of that sort. Instead, she waxed frightfully abusive because Jack did not keep her as liberally supplied with money as he had in the beginning. Jack, though he submitted meekly enough to Annie's invectives,

knowing he, in a way, deserved them, was not inclined to hear them any more than was absolutely necessary. Accordingly, he spent much the greater part of his time in the saloon. There, it is true, his feelings were often wounded, particularly of a Saturday night, because he could not help the boys to a drunk as he had formerly done; and because if he got a drunk himself, it was at the risk of being looked at askance and, possibly, openly upbraided as a sponge by them. But there female querulousness, at least, was not allowed to enter.

Jack's perpetual absence from home (he was rarely there except to sleep, and not always for that) left Annie so completely unguarded that Mike Kelliher, who had long looked on her with a tender and covetous eye, but from afar, dropped his aloofness and began to visit her often — in Cranberry Alley parlance, "hang around her." Nor did Annie discourage his "hanging around" — quite the reverse. And the day came when she admitted to Mike she wished to God she'd married him instead of Jack. Mike was not slow to recognize this as unconditional surrender, and took advantage of it accordingly.

Cranberry Alley knew just how matters stood between them long before Jack did.

It began to couple their names in leering whispers, supplemented by curious side-glances in Jack's direction. Jack noticed first the leers and side-glances, and wondered at them. Later, he caught two or three of the whispers. Putting all together, he grasped the situation and wondered no more.

Then, without making any fuss, without even so much as a word of reproach to either Annie or Mike, he quietly withdrew from Cranberry Alley, immensely relieved, if the whole truth were told (in spite of a twinge of regret for baby Tommy, whom he loved), to be rid of the conjugal yoke and of the responsibilities of a family.

JACK BECOMES SHUFFLES.

WHEN Jack left Cranberry Alley and his family, he did not leave the city. He merely retired to another quarter of it — to the Pullman Sleeper, a common lodging-house in which Buster made his home, and in which Jack had more than once taken refuge when on a spree, or when the atmosphere of his own house had been too highly charged for comfort.

The Pullman Sleeper was kept by one William Bowles, familiarly known as "Billy." It occupied all but the ground floor of an old-fashioned, hip-roofed, wooden house, two and a half stories high, stranded (like a drift-wood timber in the crevice of a seashore ledge) between five and six story brick blocks. The ground floor was occupied by a liquor saloon, and in this also Billy had a large interest; a business arrangement that worked admirably, inasmuch as it was as agreeable to Pullman Sleeper patrons on the one hand as it was profitable to Billy on the other.

The sloping-ceilinged rooms immediately under the hip-roof were four in number, and contained a dozen cot-beds each. These rooms had been little if any changed in the

transformation of the dwelling-house into the lodging-house. They still retained their antique wall-paper and small-paned windows, and were, in spite of the crowding of the beds, far more like the chambers of a country inn than like those of a modern cheap hotel. The original interior arrangement of the second floor had been considerably modified (by knocking out a partition here and there, and here and there inserting one) to provide a baggage-room and a wash-room, and to meet other exigencies of the lodging-house business. But here, also, two rooms with a capacity of about a dozen beds each had been left practically intact.

The windows of the Pullman Sleeper were not too often washed, nor the walls and ceilings too often denuded of dust, smoke, and cobwebs. The dim light and dinginess resulting, combined with the venerable age of the walls and their coverings, produced as quaint and mellow an interior as Boston had to show. Notwithstanding the disagreeable implications of its name, there was not a single gaudy note about the whole establishment. Even the bed linen, instead of being of a flaring white, was the color of thick cream, which is also the color of fine old homespun. True, the fireplace in the office had been supplanted by an enormous cylin-

drical stove. But that had been allowed to grow old naturally and gracefully; and, never having been disturbed by polishing, had gathered unto itself a beautiful mantle of rich red rust, which made it as much more picturesque than ordinary cylindrical stoves as the tangle of a field, inviolate by the scythe for many seasons, is more picturesque than the smoothness of a close-cropped lawn.

Such an air of goodly hospitality pervaded the office, particularly of a winter's evening, that there was little but this stove, the absence of tallow dips, and the disreputable raiment of the persons with whom the stove was always compassed about, to differentiate it from the public room of a road-house of ye olden time. And never was olden-time road-house more welcome to weary traveller by foot, horse, or coach than the good cheer of the Pullman Sleeper was to Jack on his arrival there. Its atmosphere of leisure, repose, and unconcern was unspeakably grateful and restful to him after the worries out of which he had just emerged.

The rates at the Pullman Sleeper were only fifteen cents a night (one dollar by the week), and yet lodgers there were entitled to as many privileges as reasonable men could demand, and a few besides. There were no rules, for instance, against the use of profane

and vulgar language, as there are in most of the dismal, unsociable, model lodging-houses; neither any against spitting on the floor, smoking in bed, card-playing (with or without stakes), drinking or getting drunk on the premises. *Habitués*, as against new-comers, had inviolable liens on the beds of their choice, so long as they were able to pay for them, and long credit, more often than not, when they could not pay. Billy, the proprietor, associated and chatted with the men naturally and familiarly, was taken freely into their confidence, and could always be depended on not to "peach." He rejoiced with them over their triumphs and condoled with them over their disappointments, with an unfeigned sympathy that did no little credit to both his head and heart. Furthermore, he often advanced money to them. This was usually spent in his own saloon, to be sure, but not always; it is only fair to Billy to say that.

For these and a dozen other reasons, which may not here be gone into, Billy had quite won his lodgers' hearts. He could count on their steady patronage; better still, on their unswerving loyalty to himself in any little difficulties that might arise — with the police. When Jack had lighted his pipe, on the night of his coming to Billy's, and had taken his place in the contented circle about the big,

rusty cylindrical stove, and had begun to bear a part in the yarning, chaffing, singing, and drinking going on about him, he felt as if he had found, at last, the one little niche in the big world into which he really fitted — and there is no more delicious sensation in life than that.

Paris, it is said, sets its mark on any man who lives in it more than a year. The common lodging-house sets its mark on a man far more quickly and indelibly than Paris.

Fully half of Billy Bowles' patrons lived entirely by begging. Most of the other half, by an ingenious combination of begging with casual labor. A small remnant, only, lived by labor divorced from begging; and this remnant was made up in great part of recent arrivals, who had been in employment when they came, but who were likely to desert the cause of labor at the first real stress of unemployment.

Jack had chosen the Sleeper as a place of refuge, because he had to go somewhere, and because Buster, who had been for several years a true chevalier of fortune, had gone to it before him. In going there he had taken no forethought as to whether he should resort to begging or not. Had he by any twist of fortune entered the Sleeper while he was in work, he might possibly have kept out

of the ranks of the beggars until he lost his job. As it was, one day was enough to make a beggar of Jack; it rarely takes more than a week.

When Jack announced to Buster that he had come to stay for good, Buster received him, notwithstanding the lack of great disparity in their ages, exactly as if he had been a long-lost and prodigal son; nor, if Buster had been Polonius and Jack his son, Laertes, could he have advised him more sagely and paternally than he did.

"Now see here, boy," said Buster, after the greetings had been spoken. "Don't make too hard work o' gettin' a livin'; a livin'll almost get itself. I know they's some hoboes gets up make-b'lieve sores an' does fits wid nasty soap-suds in their mouths, an' all that sort o' rot. Them dodges may do well enough w'en you're hard pushed, ef you hain't got no brains ter fall back on; but they's too much to 'em ter bother wid every day, an' you won't need 'em ef you've got any sort of a head-piece an' know how ter use it. I've looked inter this matter sence I've been here at Billy's, an' I jest want ter tell yer right at the start you'll be a damned idjit ef you don't do like I do.

"W'en yer wants a thing, say so, that's me motto, an' that's sens'ble enough an' easy

enough, ain't it? Ef I takes a notion I wants shoes, w'ether I need 'em or not, I don't make no bones 'bout askin' fer 'em. W'y should I? Another feller has somethin'; I wants it; an' I jest speaks right up out loud an' says I wants it. Ef th'other feller wants ter give it t'me, w'y, all right — that's nuts fer us both. Ef he don't, w'y, it's a sign he wants it more'n I do, an' that's all right too. I don't use no force wid 'im. I jest goes right on ter the nex' chap. Sooner er later, that a way, I gets shoes enough — heaps of 'em. Same way wid me coats an' me pants an' me shirts, an' all the rest o' me togs. Not's I gets 'em ter keep, seein's I ain't goin' inter sassiety much these days, an' hain't no call ter be a Johnny. I sells 'em ter the Ikies, of course, fer w'at they'll fetch. Ef I kep' 'em I'd have ter have a couple o' — w'at is't yer call 'em? — vallets, that's it; a couple o' vallets ter travel wid me an' take care o' me wardrobe, I gets sech cartloads of 'em.

"Ef I wants grub I asks fer that. An' jest look a-here! Size up me stomach, will yer! Do I look's ef I was pinin' away? Hooligan's old woman was jest the fattest thing in Cranb'ry Alley in our day; an' that you know, Jack. But yer c'n see fer yerself she warn't no fatter'n I am now. An' me that lean once me old man used ter t'reaten ter

paint me in stripes an' sell me t'a barber fer a pole, 'cause they warn't enough o' me ter be good fer nothin' else! That's w'at the bummin's done fer me leanness. Talk o' yer anti-lean! 'Tain't in it wid bummin' fer fattenin' purposes, ef yer does the bummin' right.

"But ter resume me wants. Ef it's cold cash I wants, 'stead o' grub or goods ter be traded, I asks fer that too. Not but w'at cash's harder ter get than th'other things. 'Tain't everybody'll give yer cash, that's dead sure; but I c'n spot 'em as will. Some of 'em's women, too, though people do say (an' it's so) that women folks is more apt ter be close wid the chink than men. (P'r'aps that's becuz they don't make it theirselves an' don't know how easy it comes. I s'pose they think it comes hard t'their husbands 'cause it's so hard ter get it out o' their husbands.) Anyhow, they's some women would rather give yer mun straight out than ter bother ter hunt up shoes, an' clothes, an' grub. *You* can't spot 'em yet, Jack, fer yer hain't got me profesh'nal eye; but yer'll do it some day, boy, afore I'm t'rough wid yer.

"As fer booze, that's easiest o' the whole lot. Best things most gen'rally comes hardest. Booze, that's a exception. Booze don't, an' that I s'pose's becuz the very thought of

it kind o' opens up a feller's heart. They's plenty o' blokes'll help yer t'a swig o' booze — good fellers as know w'at 'tis ter have a t'roat like a square yard o' raw muskeeter bites. Watch fer the chaps as show signs of a t'irst. It's dead easy tellin' 'em. Sometimes yer c'n smell 'em. W'en yer ain't near enough fer that, yer c'n see 'em fondle the liquor winders kind o' longin'ly wid their eyes, jest like a dawg does his master's hand wid his tongue; other times — oh, they's lots o' other ways! But yer don't want ter spring yer booze racket on no teetot'lers nor no prohibitionists. Holy Mulligan! but yer'll get it ef yer do. They'll give yer the damnedest jaw-jawin' ever yer had in yer life, ef yer have been a married man. I never run a-muck o' one but once, an' then fer about ten seconds I couldn't make up me mind w'ether a dynamite catridge had exploded in me face or a hose had bust. But yer c'n mostly tell the sort they are, wid no meltin' in their eyes; an' their teeth hard set, like the halves of a screwed-up monkey-wrench; an' their lips tight drawed down over their teeth, like they'd got lockjaw out o' fear some bloke was a goin' ter come along an' pry their damned jaws apart wid a crowbar, an' make 'em drink booze w'at is booze, 'stead o' the wish-washy, mush-mushy, flip-floppy, slip-

sloppy, sweetened things they calls 'temp'rance drinks' — things as would ruin the stomach of a Christian man inside o' three puffs of a hobo's pipe.

"Keep yer eye peeled, too, fer the street girls. Ef one o' them's got a man wid her, yer c'n bet she'll jest make 'im tip yer a good-sized haul. She'll look yer way ever so tender, an' smile a kind o' sorry, nice smile on yer wid the tears half-way out o' her eyes, an' then she'll get determined all of a sudden, an' say a word low to her man, an' he'll heave out the cash. He don't want ter give yer nothin', like's not, but he don't dare do no other ways 'fore the girl, fer fear she'll t'ink he's stingy. W'en she hain't got no man wid her she'll give yer mun herself ef she's got it, an' that's about a even nip an' tuck. They're damned good stuff, the street girls are; got more real feelin' an' pity an' charity in the powder on the tips o' their noses than lots o' the charity women, I've been a-beggin' ter, have in their hearts, or w'atever 'tis they carries in place of 'em on the inside o' their ribs. You'd a'most t'ink from the way the wenches helps us out they belonged t'our trade. An' so 'tis a fac' that we're both down on most other folks 'cause most other folks is down on us.

"Ef a biddy happens ter come t'the door w'en you're to a private house (an' they're

always a-pokin' their scraggly heads w'ere they ain't wanted), yer don't want ter let 'em bluff yer out o' seein' the missis; — but w'at the Devil am I up ter, a-talkin' so much wid me mout' that I'm clean fergittin' ter drink wid it, w'en drinkin's the main use o' a big hole in a man's face, an' not talkin' at all! Here, Redney, — quick, boy, — pass me that can afore Fat gets a whack at it, fer I hain't no notion ter drink air, an' that's all Fat ever leaves a man.

"They ain't much use o' me talkin' 'bout the hustlin' anyhow, fer yer can't teach it that a way. Besides, I come mighty near fergittin', Jack, *you* ain't no tenderfoot. Yer did a good bit o' hustlin' fer yer dad in yer kid days — long 'fore ever I thought o' bein' a bum; so yer won't be havin' none o' them mawkish, flimflam feelin's some has w'en they starts in. W'y, I've seen 'em that weak, the first man they struck, you'd fair believe their backbones had been turned ter dish-rags an't they'd got whoppin' big frogs in their t'roats an' buzz-saws in their knees.

"Jest yer come out wid me termorrer, Jack, an' I'll show yer how ter work it; put yer up ter all the tricks an' send a heap o' things yer way. An' wid the start yer've got, I'll make a jolly good bum of yer in no time, an' I'm the man's can do it. I wouldn't do it fer

every bloke as struck this ranch, yer c'n just bet on that; but *you're* an' old Cranb'ry, Jack, an' me 'n' you's been pals most always, Jack, up ter w'en yer got hitched on t'a family (as brought yer bad luck, as they mostly does), an' I knows yer stuff. Look a here, Jack, do yer mind how we wolfed old Jock Willums out o' that speckled hen he kep' tied by one leg t'his clothes-post; an' how we had a bonfire an' roastid chickin after dark in Finnegan's empty lot, an' how old Jock walloped his kid, Midgit, fer lettin' the hen loose, an' Midgit a-knowin' all the time 'twas us done it, an' not lettin' on a word fer fear we'd club him worse'n his dad!"

Then Jack recalled the glorious ruses of the Clan-na-Gael picnic, and Buster his fight with Booze O'Brien. And thus they went on, these two ex-Cranberries, recounting their boyhood escapades and gloating over them with as keen a delight in the reminiscence of former cunning and prowess as was ever taken by reunited college chums or old comrades in arms. And then they drank a turn all round, and sang, and did some step-dancing, and life was a goodly thing withal. The more they sang and danced the drier they got, and the more they drank; and the more they drank, the more inclined they felt to sing and dance, up to the point, that is,

where the soporific influence of the drink asserted itself so far as to preclude the possibility of every sort of lyric utterance, and then they fell on sleep. But before this last had happened, Buster had made a little peroration.

And this it was: "Yes, Jack, me 'n' you'll be pals again. Ah there, Jack, old boy? An' it makes me feel good jest ter think of it, an' w'en I feels good I takes a drink, an' w'en I takes a drink you takes a drink, an' w'en me 'n' you takes a drink everybody takes a drink. So then here's t'yer health, Jack! An' here's ter my health, Buster! An' here's t'everybody's health, hoboes! An' that settles it. An' now we're pals again!

"Yes,

'We're old pals,
Jolly old pals,
We keep tergether
In all sorts o' weather.
We're old pals,
Jolly old pals,
There's naught like the friendship
Of jolly old pals.'"

Buster took Jack out on his route the next day, as he had promised to do, and was more than satisfied with the hustling ability he displayed. As they were returning to the Sleeper late in the afternoon, Buster's practised eye detected a sort of slight shuffle in Jack's gait that had not been there when he

set out in the morning. A purely professional mannerism it was that Jack had acquired all unconsciously during the day. Thereupon Buster, who had a fine descriptive talent, laughingly dubbed him "Shuffles." The boys at Billy's quickly took it up (the name fitted so beautifully) and called him "Shuffles" too. So "Shuffles" Jack became to the boys and to himself, and "Shuffles" Jack remained.

Buster and the Pullman Sleeper together had at last consummated the thing for which Jack's pedigree, early training, weaknesses, and misfortunes had jointly foreordained him.

It was as easy, as simple, as natural, as inevitable, at the last, as the proverbial rolling off a log; for the fulness of time was come.

SHUFFLES' SECOND LOVE-AFFAIR.

IT was nine o'clock of a December night, several years after Jack had become Shuffles. Wind was driving sleet so deftly and so fiercely that the air was as if ten thousand "Dagos" were amusing themselves therein with stilettos. Sleet or moonlight, it was all one, just then, to Shuffles, who was lying on the door-steps of a Harrison Avenue tenement-house, unconscious; that, too, although he had not had a drop to drink during the day; rather, perhaps, *because* he had not. Passers were either too much engrossed with the sleet to see him, or, seeing him, took it for granted he was intoxicated and let him lie. Ten o'clock came, and nobody had stopped to examine him far enough to decide whether he was a corpse or a drunk. Nobody had cared. By eleven o'clock two or three persons had stumbled over him in entering the tenement; but these, either taking him to be drunk or being half drunk themselves, had not minded him, in their eagerness to get out of the storm, any more than the passers.

Fan Wheelwright, who came only a little before twelve, was the last person to enter the house that night. She too stumbled over

Shuffles, and she too took him to be drunk; but she saw in that no reason for letting him freeze, as he seemed in a fair way of doing if left undisturbed. Drunk or not, he should have refuge for the night — longer, if he needed it. She did her utmost to rouse him, but could not. So she dragged him by main force first into the hallway and then into her room, which was luckily on the ground floor. There, being immediately convinced that she had to do with a very sick man and not with a drunken one, she summoned help from the tenants, got him on the bed, and sent for a doctor.

Shuffles was ill for many weeks. Fan claimed him as her foundling, and would not hear of his being removed to a hospital. Day in and day out she sat by his bedside, tending him as gently and as faithfully as ever a woman tended a prostrate man.

At last the doctor pronounced his patient well enough to go; but he did not go. Shuffles and Fan had, in the most natural way possible, grown fond of each other, and Shuffles stayed on. The other tenants, almost all of whom had watched with the sick man one or more nights during the danger, and who had always spoken of him then (taking up Fan's own word) as "Fan Wheelwright's foundling," came to speak of him, laughingly,

though far from censoriously, as "Fan Wheelwright's man." Quick to recognize the new relation, they were equally quick to approve it.

Shuffles ceased to appear at the Pullman Sleeper. The boys there — only Buster was let into the secret — naturally took it for granted that he had gone on an excursion to the Island. Little did they guess, and much would they have marvelled had they been told, that the isle Shuffles had embarked for was the Isle of Cythera.

Fan, who up to the time of her chance meeting with Shuffles had been one of the women whom Buster had declared "most other folks was down on," exchanged her old *mêtier* for Shuffles' own. She quickly learned all of Shuffles' tricks, and her woman's wit devised others, peculiarly adapted to her sex, which proved equally or even more effective. Thus they managed a very good living between them.

Considering her past (a superfluous qualification, perhaps, but custom demands it), Fan's devotion to Shuffles was wonderful, almost beyond belief. All the force, fire, and tenderness of the woman's soul was in it. She who had never been permitted to have husband or child, though she had yearned for both, lavished upon Shuffles the wealth of feeling she might otherwise have given them.

If Shuffles did not respond exactly in kind to Fan's mighty, almost superhuman, affection, it was at least true that he was very devoted to her in his own manly way, and that he loved her more than he had ever loved anybody else in the world. Whatever Jack's faults were, ingratitude was not of them. He never for an instant let himself forget that Fan had saved his life twice: first by taking him out of the storm, and afterwards by her faithful nursing, which, the doctor had assured him, was the only thing that had pulled him through. He was unspeakably grateful, too, for her affection, inasmuch as it was almost as new and sweet and penetrating a sensation for him to be thus fiercely loved as it was to Fan to love. And he appreciated the delicate, little womanly attentions and kindnesses with which she surrounded him, at more than their par value, perhaps, because he had never received them from Annie, not even during the honeymoon.

Notwithstanding an occasional disagreement when they were deep in their cups, one or both of them, — even when love takes up his dwelling there, it is a far call from Harrison Avenue to Paradise, — Fan and Shuffles were, on the whole, very happy together.

Did they last — the happiness and the

affection? No, they did not, for death intervened. Shuffles' love-affairs were somehow fated. Could they have lasted otherwise? Possibly not. And yet, that they could not, no man knows and no man may affirm, for the very last act of the woman's life suggested infinity of passion.

The Harrison Avenue tenement in which Jack and Fan lived caught fire and burned to the ground. Fan, who was in Mulligan's saloon at the time the alarm was given, catching a rumor there that her own house was in flames and that a man's life was in danger, came running up the street, in the midst of the fire, breathless, wild-eyed, almost frantic in her very natural fear that the imperilled man was her own Shuffles.

"Where's Shuffles? Where's Shuffles?" Hither and thither she rushed with her question; but people turned away, shaking their heads. Either they could not tell her or they would not. Finally, from a tenant of the floor above her own, she got her answer: "I'm that sorry for you, Fan," said Mrs. Ricker, barely keeping back the tears, "but they say — everybody says — your man, Shuffles, was full when he went in there," — pointing to the burning house, — "an' he hain't been seen to come out since. May God have mercy on his soul!"

Fan uttered a single, inarticulate cry, part shriek, part sob, part moan, a cry expressing love, defiance, despair, all together, more like the yelp of a she-dog defending her whelps against hopeless odds than the voice of a human being; and quick as a flash, before a person could lay a hand on her to hold her back, rushed past the fire-line and was running up the burning steps. She paused on the topmost step — for an instant only — to face the crowd who were frantically calling her to come back. "No, no!" she fairly shrieked her answer. "No, no, — my God, no! I'd rather die a thousand times than live without my Shuffles!" Then, clasping her hands high over her head, like a diver, she leaped headlong into the flames.

They dug her from the ruins the next forenoon, a charred and shapeless mass more thing than woman, and they buried her the day after that at the city's expense in the Potter's Field.

No other body being found in the *débris*, it was decided that Shuffles had not been in the burning building, after all.

Shuffles had been drunk, beastly drunk, the night of the fire and the next night and for two nights after that; but it had been in quite another part of the city. Fan had been two days under ground before he had any

word or was in any condition to receive word of the catastrophe. When he heard the tidings, Shuffles, without so much as going to view the ruins, took refuge once again in the Pullman Sleeper.

SHUFFLES' CONVERSION.

WHETHER it was due to remorse for his indirect part in the tragic death of Fan; or to his being so dazed by the awfulness of the tragedy that he could not summon the mental energy necessary to successful begging; or to the leaden *ennui* that bore him down, in the absence of the affection and constant attention he had become accustomed to; or to the love of change proceeding from his vagabond instinct; or to a sudden outcropping of a fondness for music; or to a deliberate intention of turning over a new leaf; or to all these causes combined,— Shuffles began frequenting the Holy Angels' Mission soon after his return to the Pullman Sleeper.

He sat at the mission one night, with downcast head, hearing nothing of the service for thinking of Fan. Every circumstance and event of their life together passed before him, from the moment when he came out of his delirium to find her, a stranger then, bending anxiously over him and calling him her baby ("Never mind who I am. I found you on my door-step, and you're my baby now" — those were her very words, the first he ever

heard her speak, and they had always remained with him), to the moment of the sublime but horrible *suttee*, which he had not seen, but which he seemed to have seen a thousand times, so incessantly had it been before his mental vision. Remorse laid violent hold of him and almost throttled him. He, Shuffles Wilson, had been lying beastly drunk, while Fan, his sweetheart, the best, the most loyal, woman he had ever known or ever would know, was giving up her life for love of him; beastly drunk, when the ghastly thing that had been she — Shuffles had not been spared a single gruesome detail of the affair — had been excavated from the ruins; beastly drunk, too (and this was worst of all from Shuffles' point of view), when they had put the body away, without so much as a flower or a tear to grace the ugly pine box that served for a coffin!

Damn the liquor! Damn the luck! Damn himself! Damn everything!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The missionary was talking. Shuffles suddenly realized it and found himself listening. That was what Fan did, laid down her life for a friend, for him, Shuffles, a lodging-house bum, a poor, dirty, good-for-nothing hobo, but her friend. He missed her so, and

there was no one to take her place! There was his pal, Buster, to be sure, and there were Fat and Snipe and Snowball and Chicken and Roaring Pete, and the rest of the men at Billy's, all good fellows and his friends; but somehow they were different. He doubted whether they would lay down their lives for him. If only he might have another such friend, now that his Fan was gone!

"Why won't you believe that Jesus is your friend?" the missionary went on; and Shuffles could hardly trust his ears, the words were so pertinent to him. "Why won't you believe that He loved you and laid down His life for you — for every one of you; for you, and you, and *you*, and YOU!" pointing his finger at several men in rapid succession, and resting it finally on Shuffles. "It's true, yes, it's true, brothers, whether you believe it or not. Jesus laid down His life for you because He loved you. But that was only His earthly life; still He's living, and still He's loving you.

"He died for you, I say. Let me tell you how He died. You must have heard it. On the cross it was, between two thieves, men as wicked as yourselves; more so, perhaps; and His crucifiers drove nails into His hands and feet, and thrust a spear into His side, and pressed a crown of cruel thorns on His forehead till the blood trickled out from under

them. And the crowd jeered Him, and mocked Him, and spit in His face. And He bore it all willingly for your sakes, because He loved you.

"I see Him now, here, right here in this room, your friend, your very best friend. Oh, how He loves you! Yes, I see Him, I say, and so do you — you, and you, and *you*, and YOU!" Again the index-finger rested last on Shuffles, and Shuffles felt a thrill along his spine, and a throbbing in his neck and temples, and a quaking in his knees before the finger left him. "*You* see Him too, I know you do. It's no use shutting your eyes against Him; the tighter you shut them the plainer you'll see Him.

"He's holding out His hands to you and asking you to take them, asking you to trust Him and love Him, asking you to let Him be your friend. How do I know it's Jesus I see? I know it from the cruel nail-prints on His hands; and then the glory of His face, there's no mistaking that! Oh, why don't you do as He would have you? Why don't you, brothers? Why don't you stretch your hands out and lay them in His? You won't do it? You, you poor wretched hoboes — sick, drunken, thieving, vile, adulterous! You're too proud to have the perfect Jesus for your friend, too proud to give the spotless Jesus

your hand! Oh, the sin, the shame, the folly of it! Ha, ha! you, you of all men, you don't want the hand of Jesus! Why, it fairly makes me laugh! You, you of all men, think you can walk alone, when you've got no more sight nor strength than a litter of kittens just dropped. Your eyes are stuck together tight, and you can't move without falling all over yourselves.

"Why don't you, oh, why don't you give Him your hands? It may be the last chance you'll ever have to take His hands. Yes, it *is* your last chance, I do believe it is. See! He's turning away from you sorrowful, turning towards the door, because you've grieved Him so sore. Don't, don't, don't, in God's name, don't drive Him away sorrowful! It's an awesome thing, it's an awful thing to do! Yes, He *is* going, He surely is, and all because you'll have none of Him. And He may never come back! Merciful Jesus, turn back now, turn back to these sinful men; have pity on them, dearest Jesus, for they know not what they do!

"Ah! He's heard my prayer. Watch! He's turning toward you once again. He can't bear to go, because He loves you so. Yes, brothers, thank God for it, brothers, He's going to give you one more chance. Oh, how merciful He is! He's stretching

out His hands again for you to take, and there is love and there is pity in His eyes. Now, this time, do stretch out your hands, both hands, to the best friend you ever had or ever can have, to the friend who loved you so that He died for you. Stretch out your hands to Him; stretch them out, *stretch them out*, STRETCH THEM OUT! You, and you, and *you*, and YOU!" and with that last "you" the speaker's index-finger found Shuffles again and fixed him.

Then a wonderful thing happened. The hands of Shuffles went out before him without his willing them to go, impelled by some mysterious agency. He could not have stopped them if he would, and he was not at all sure that he wished to stop them. He felt them grasped by other hands, and, looking up, beheld a loving, tear-stained face that he seemed always to have known — the face of Jesus. And Jesus bent yearningly over him and kissed him on the brow.

"Hallelujah! Bless God! Bless God for a soul, for another soul saved! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!" came from the missionary and his workers, but Shuffles heard them not.

He had found another friend who loved him even as Fan had loved him. And he laid his throbbing head on the bosom of that friend with the abandon of a tired, suffering

child; and he wept like a child and smiled through his tears. The arms of infinite love were round about him.

"Now come up to the front seat, brother, where the friends of Jesus are," resumed the missionary, "and we'll all talk with Him together. We'll beg Him never to let go our hands, and to hold us back from fornications, cursings, drinkings, lyings, and all the works of the Devil. That's right, brother, come up! Let Jesus, let your new friend lead you!"

An instant, and Shuffles found himself in the midst of the redeemed, drawn thither, without conscious effort on his part, like vapor toward the sun. The friends of Jesus crowded around the newly saved one and cried, all together: "Hallelujah! Bless God for a soul that is saved!" Then Shuffles cried, also: "Hallelujah! Bless God for a soul that is saved!" though he wot not what he said, nor that the rescued soul he spake of was his own. The friends of Jesus prayed, and Shuffles prayed as they prayed. And he loved the people who were praying and crying "Hallelujah!" round about him, and he loved his new friend; his very being was dissolved in love.

And his face shone like unto the face of Moses coming out of the Mount of the Law.

SHUFFLES' BACKSLIDING.

SHUFFLES was "gloriously saved." He promised everything asked of him: promised to abjure drinking, swearing, chewing, and smoking; promised to pray, and read the Bible daily; promised to give up begging; promised to WORK. He was set brush-making in the mission workshop, and, for his easier perseverance in the new life, he slept at the mission.

The first ecstasy of his conversion past, the warmth of the relation with the new friend quickly waned, but there was an after-glow from it which produced really beautiful "testimonies" regarding the friend's worth. When the after-glow had also gone,— this was at the end of about a month, — Shuffles' "testimonies" ceased to be heard. He was too honest with himself, and too much in earnest, to prate about emotions which he did not feel. He held steadily to his work; he kept away from the drink; he tried hard not to swear; he added a dearly loved pipe (in evidence of the persistence of his determination to abstain from tobacco) to the grotesque collection of trophies — mainly pipes, flasks, and beer-bottles — with which the

mission-room walls were adorned; he attended faithfully all the evening meetings as well as morning and afternoon prayers. But he had no more visions, no more mysterious and irresistible leadings, no more overmastering emotions, no more of that intimate personal converse with the Christ that had signalled his conversion; and having absolutely nothing to say he kept his seat and said nothing.

The superintendent of the mission, irritated by an attitude (almost unprecedented) which he was not large-minded enough to comprehend, proceeded to nag Shuffles quite as persistently as Annie had nagged him during his days as a married man. There must be something wrong, he said. It was faith that saved, not works; and faith always had the gift of tongues. If Shuffles did not have anything to say, it must be he did not have faith.

Nagging failed, however, to produce the desired effect; so the baffled superintendent resorted to bulldozing. Their home was for converted men. People who had really been converted could always give grand "testimonies." If he wasn't willing to testify, he couldn't really have been converted, and they shouldn't be able to keep him. There were plenty of converted men who *would* testify waiting for his place in the home. Dogs were more grateful than he was. Dogs at

least wagged their tails, and that was something.

Matters were just here, and Shuffles, who was not of the sort to be bulldozed, was seriously debating with himself a return to the less subtle and puzzling environment of the Pullman Sleeper, when a thing happened, in one of the meetings, which abruptly put an end to all his self-examination, as well as to his connection with the Holy Angels' Mission.

There was a new leader, a big, coarse, loud-voiced and brutal, though probably sincere, man,—the greatest brutality is, unfortunately, consistent with the greatest sincerity. In the course of his opening remarks, he made a number of ranting, wild, dogmatic statements. A small man in one of the front rows, sober, clean, and well-dressed (a freethinker, perhaps, perhaps not, for in the determination of orthodoxy all things are relative), rose to his feet and politely asked the privilege of saying a few words. The leader, thus addressed, turned upon him with the snap and snarl of a vicious cur, and threatened to put him out for disturbing the meeting; whereupon the little man protested, with admirable calmness and good nature, that nothing had been further from his intention than creating a disturbance. He had asked permission to speak, he said, simply because

he took issue with some of the leader's statements and had obeyed a natural impulse to explain what they were and why he took issue with them. The leader, more infuriated by his calmness and his courtesy than he could have been by bluster of his own sort, was lunging forward, with an angry snort and an imprecation scarcely permitted by the Decalogue, to eject him, when he himself was sent reeling backward by a blow planted straight between the eyes from the fist of — Shuffles.

Now, Shuffles was not inclined to scrutinize dogmas, however ranting and improbable they might be; but he did have manhood enough left in him, for all his years of bumming, to insist on fair play, — so much even the ethics and the etiquette of the street demanded, — and, to his thinking, for a big brute of a man, clothed with a little brief authority, to bully an inoffensive little fellow, just for nothing at all, was not fair play nor anything like it. If he must choose between fair play and serving the Lord, he would choose fair play every time. Thus the situation had flashed on Shuffles' inner sight while he was gathering himself together for the blow.

That blow given, a fight was on. The audience, delighted with the unexpected

metamorphosis of a meeting into a mill, cheered the combatants lustily, quickly forming a ring about them; and there was bedlam both within the ring and without it. Shuffles, though his irregular life had left him far from what he once was with his fists, was still, in point of skill, no mean antagonist, and the righteousness of his cause restored to him most of his pristine strength.

His lean arms played in and out of the holy man's anatomy with the force and regularity of steel piston-rods, which, in very truth, they more resembled than they did normal arms. His onslaught was so effective that it was not long before the leader got decidedly "groggy." He was tottering to his fall, feebly sawing the air with his enormous arms, when a solid phalanx of mission *attachês*, who had been in another part of the building at the beginning of the fray, broke through the ring from without, rescued their bloody and badly battered saint, and ejected Shuffles (his piston-rods of arms still playing back and forth, for his blood was up) plump into the astonished and much embarrassed embrace of a policeman, whom the noise of the disturbance had attracted thither from more than a block away.

The policeman, after making up his mind as to the true inwardness of the situation by

a brief sidewalk parley with all the parties involved, took Shuffles, as if under arrest, just out of sight of the Holy Angels' door, and let him go, on his more than gladly given promise never to enter the place again. Clearly, Officer P——, like Shuffles himself, was better versed in the ethics and etiquette of the street than of missions.

Within three hours of his release, Shuffles had hustled half a dollar, got himself jolly drunk, and found his way back to the Pullman Sleeper and his friends. He was himself again, and glad enough he was to be himself. Yes, Shuffles had backslidden, beyond the shadow of a doubt. The weeks of temperance, piety, and work, under the wing of the mission, he would have set down as lost time had he not looked at them in the light of a sort of penance due to the memory of Fan, toward whom his feelings did not cease to be tender.

Serving the Lord was plainly not in Shuffles' line, and he never tried it again.

"Seemin'ly I went ter the bad" — it was thus he always used to conclude the narrative of his conversion. "Seemin'ly I warn't cut out fer a Christian. Seemin'ly I was cut out fer a bum." And this was by far the profoundest word that ever fell from the lips of Shuffles.

THE LAST OF SHUFFLES.

THOUGH Shuffles had not communicated at all with Annie since leaving her, he had always managed, in one way and another (mainly through the kindly offices of those of the Cranberries who knew his whereabouts), to get frequent news of his boy, Tommy, whom he had never for a moment ceased to love. He was cautious about traversing Cranberry Alley, and he had never made himself known to Tommy; but often, when he chanced to be in that quarter of the city, occasionally, when he had made it a point to be there, he watched him at play in the Alley, from a discreet position just around one corner. At these times, the thought of kidnapping the boy always came to him and haunted him. It would be the easiest thing in the world, Shuffles thought, to take the boy. Once taken, by either transferring him to New York or resorting with him to the country and keeping to it the year round, instead of merely summering there (as had been his and Buster's custom), he would run no great risk of detection; and even if he were detected, he did not greatly fear the consequences. But he could never quite resolve

on the thing, because he was not willing to ruin his boy's chances in life by apprenticing him to the hobo trade. Hobodom might be good enough for him, Shuffles; it was not good enough for his boy. If it was because he loved Tommy that he wished to have him, still more was it because he loved him that he would not do him wrong. Had he been able to make himself believe that Annie neglected or abused him, and he tried to do it, he would have made the boy his with all despatch; but from what he could learn she was sufficiently fond of him to treat him well, tenderly even.

There came an afternoon, like many another, when Tommy was playing in the Alley, and Shuffles (having had an exceptionally good forenoon) was happy in watching him from his usual coigne of vantage.

Carpenters were at work repairing the corner house, a ramshackle tenement which had been condemned by the Health Board, with the design of making it tenantable once more. Their stagings and standing ladders projected over the sidewalk, and the children were running in and out under them in their play. Suddenly, through some careless movement of the workmen above, or some unforeseen yielding of the rotten building, one of the heaviest of the ladders swayed

and fell. Tommy was directly in the path of it at the time, but so, by virtue of an instantaneous and mighty leap, was Shuffles (with his arms about the boy) before the ladder struck.

Father and son measured the pavement together. Tommy, thanks to Shuffles' greater height and protecting arms, was little hurt. Shuffles was killed instantly. Poor fellow! though he died with Tommy in his embrace (it was kidnapping of a godlike sort his fate had thrust upon him), he had gone on the long tramp alone.

And that was the last of Shuffles.

DE MORTUIS NIL NISI BONUM

AT the Pullman Sleeper, as at most of the common lodging-houses, a death is a rare thing indeed; not so much because the patrons are peculiarly healthy as because the indisposed are hurried away to the hospital at the first symptoms of serious illness; a proceeding not more for the interest of the afflicted than of the proprietor and the other lodgers, who, after a fashion of their own, are as superstitious as sailors are, and cannot bear to have a sick man about. But once in a great while, in spite of all precautions, Death — the knave! — steals in unannounced. So he came to the Pullman Sleeper one night in the late fall of '95, and the next morning Philip Budlong, familiarly known as "Fat," was found dead in his bed.

Buster, Snipe, Chicken, Snowball, Chub, Brick, Roaring Pete, the Dominie, and a dozen others, were sitting about the office stove, the evening following, discussing the dead man. Buster you know already. The

rest you do not know. Suffice it to say they were all old friends of your friend, Shuffles; no further introduction should be necessary.

"Oi'm shtrong av the opinion," said Irish Barney, "they ain't no wan here, wid the excepshun av mesilf an' Buster, is awaare how Fat come ter take a holt av the bummin'. As far mesilf, as ye're all afther a-knowin', Oi was crool dhriven to't by me ould man, fwhat was a ghrocer in a shmall way av his own, a-dhrowndin' hisself far dishpair, bekaze he cudn't hould his own agin the comin' in av the big consarns."

"Orra, shut up yer lhip, ye blatherin' Oirishman!" ejaculated Snipe in disgust, interrupting him; "an' shure ut's mesilf's anither wan, but thot's nayther here nor there! Ut's nawt ye nor the kindrid av ye we're a-carin' abhout the noight. So hould up the tongue av yez, wid yer outrajis pretinshuns ter be gintry. 'Yer ould man a ghrocer in a shmall way!' Begad an' ye're roight there, a shmall way ut was, an' a dam shmall way, so shmall ye cudn't see ut av ye didn't know ut was there — jest a-sellin' bad booze in 'is kitchun, an' a-sellin' no more av ut than anny dacint man 'ud ha' gi'n away til his fri'nds! An' yer 'ould man a-dhrowndin' hisself far dishpair!' whin they warn't a kid in the hull South Cove warn't aware, at the toime,

'twas from bein' dishgracefully dhrunk thot Terence O'Rourke crawled intil the puddle av Harrigan's cellar-hole, an' didn't have sinse enough ter crawl out. Av ye've got annythin' ter till abhout our Fat, as is lyin' dead the dhay, — an' God rist the sowl av 'im! — ye have the floor, Barney O'Rourke. Go on wid ye, till fwhat ye knows, an' wilcome. But don't ye be comin' ut over us wid yer decayed gintilmin an' family phride rackut! Av ye think ye can be shtringin' the loikes av us wid the loikes av thot, ye're away off yer nut, Barney O'Rourke. Oh, but ye do thry me pasht pashunts!"

Barney resumed: "As Oi was a rhemharkin', before thot impartinint intarrupshin, ut was from crool necessity Oi tuk to the hustlin', — savin' yer rivirince, *Mister* Rooney, — an' fwhat's more (av Oi may be permitted ter say Oi'm aloive), Oi've niver got clane over the dishgrace ter mesilf an' me swate babes."

"'Swate babes!' Swate litther av cur pups!" Snipe interjected; but Barney went right on, pretending not to have heard. "Oi was crool dhriven to't as Oi'm afther a-sayin'; but Fat he tuk to't by way av a quhaint kind av a accidint. Ye'll nawt be knowin', Snipe Rooney, thot Fat was a Englishman. But he was thot, widout yer preshious knowledge, an' ut's thot an' the divil av a lot av other things ye'll nawt

be knowin'. But don't be dishcuruged, bhy, ye'll be afther a-larnin' in toime, av ye'll talk less yersilf an' listun more til the talk av yer betthers, as jest this minut ye're a-doin'. But ut's nawt the loikes av ye is wuth washtin' me wind on, whin ut's me swate priviluge ter shpake abhout Fat, as was a white man av he was a dam Britisher! An' wid Fat, this here was the way av it. Whin furrst he quit the boat he'd come from the Ould Counthry in, he'd his fate thot painful wid bad loomps an' sores (he'd somehow got the infeckshun av in the steerage), ut was jest barely he cud manage ter walk. So he shtopped a man on the strate an' ashked him far ter till him how he'd be afther foindin' his way t'a fate horspittle. The man, seein' 'im as grane as the Oirish flag, an' as hilpliss an' innercint as a gurrl, an' a-talkin' a furrin kind av talk, — far 'twas the Cockney he was a-talkin', an' Oirish may be quare, but Oirish ain't in ut wid the Cockney whin ut's the rale shtuff, — fwhat did he do but pull a dhollar bill out av his pockut an' give ut to 'im whin he hadn't ashked fer a rhid cint, nor had the t'ought av ashkin'! Thin he chucked him onter a car fer the City Horspittle. An' thin Fat tuk ter considerin' the manin' av the sitooashun afther this fashun: 'Oi sez ter mesilf, sez Oi,' — the many toimes Fat's tould me

abhout ut in the ould dhays! — 'thot's an aisy way ter arn dhollars, Oi'm thinkin', an' Oi'd loike a few more av the color av that wan, av 'tis a dam Oirish grane; an' fwhat's ter hinder me gettin' thim before me fate's cobbled?' An' wid thot Fat got off the car, an' he niver got til the horspittle that day nor no other, far his fate got well by theirsels. But he was a full year an' a half a-limpin' to't before the dodge got plhayed out wid 'im. Oi've sayd me say, bhys, an' now ut's the chanst av the rist av yez; an' av Snipe Rooney is wantin' ter talk now, ut's the wilcome he is, far the all av me. But hevin hilp the pashunts av ye av he does! Jest wan worrud more in the ears av the rist av yez before Oi shtop. Oi'm honust av the opinion ut's intarrupshin Snipe Rooney's shtrong at, havin' no ideas av his own, an' thot ut's him'll be a-houldin' his tongue now Oi'm trough."

Snipe sulkily declining to respond to the challenge implied in Barney's closing sally, there was a brief pause. Then "The Dominie" (so called because he was the possessor of a modicum of spelling and grammar) took up the thread of eulogy:

"Barney said Fat worked that there hospital trick full a year and a half. Well, Fat has never worked the same trick that long since I've known him. Why, Fat he was the

greatest for getting up new tricks of any man who's ever lived here at Billy's — did it just for fun when the old ones were working well and he didn't have no need of them. Talk about his working one trick a year and a half, when I've known him to work three or four new ones the same day, any one of them good to keep a man going a month! No, no, Barney, I'm not doubting your word," as the supersensitive Barney showed signs of protesting, "he hadn't really got started, Fat hadn't, as far back as you've been telling about. Fat, you see, liked to take a bit of change and speculate with it in a small way; because speculation gave him a big chance for head-work, and 'twas the head-work part of bumming he liked the best of all.

"One day he bought a basket of split wood for a dime, and went around to the houses with it pretending he wanted to sell it. He put up a dandy yarn about being too proud to beg, and the wood's being the only thing he had left in the house to buy bread with for a starving wife and children, and so on.

"And do you know he sold the wood a dozen times over that day for a quarter each time, and still had it on his hands for another day if he chose to use it?

"Nobody wanted the wood, of course. People bought it, though, just out of pity, and

then turned round and made him a present of it. 'Twas all in the way he worked up that yarn and told it. Now, I have my own strong points, but I might have tried that very same dodge till the next election without making it work. If I'd sold that basket of wood once I should have thought myself lucky, and then the man, whoever bought it, would have done it to get it cheap and Jewed me down on my price. Oh, but he was hot stuff, was Fat. He made a big thing of it; more than enough to set him up in a straight business, if he hadn't turned it all into the booze. I tell you what it is, boys, I'm afraid the booze's going to be mighty scarce in this here ranch now Fat's gone, for he turned in more week in and week out than any three of us put together. And I want to say right here, boys, while he's still lying above the ground, and I want to say it because it's the solemn truth, that just as often as Fat made a haul we all got the good of it, and that's what I call dealing square. If we were all of us in this room as freehanded as Fat was, there'd never none of us be a-lacking for booze."

Snipe was by this time out of his sulks, and was ready to add his word of appreciation:

"Begad, an' we here bums ain't no tay-coops nor pint-dhippers, fw'ativer we are or we ain't; but they ain't wan av us, nawt a

blissid wan, cud suk in the bhooze wid Fat. Fw'ativer we was or we was nawt, we was all tay-coops an' pint-dhippers by the side av him. Oi've seen thim in the lhand av me burrth wid sukshons like the feed-pipes av fire-ingines, but divil a wan have Oi seen in the lhand av me burrth or the lhand av me vote wid a sukshon like the sukshon av Fat. Will Oi remimber the toime he dhrunk two min intil Fennessey's sawdoost, the wan afther the ither, on a foive-dhollar bet, an' thin dhrunk clane t'rough the winnin's wid the gang av us. Niver wan turn did he shirk! An' he wint to the Slaper that noight shtandun' shtraight as a wax candle jest rheady ter loight far a wakin', an' ivery blissid wan of the lave av us bint ower loike the voines av dead pertaties, far the dhrunk we was. Orra, but ut's the verra hoide av me bhody Oi'd be givin' far an insoide loike the insoide av Fat!

"An' now Oi'll call ye ivery wan ter witnuss Oi've said mhore an' talked liss in wan minut than Barney O'Rourke dud in foive."

There were many other tributes in a similar vein. Every phase of the dead man's prowess in drink, pugilism, deceit, idleness, and profanity (cardinal qualities of the ideal bum) was illustrated in detail. But it remained for Buster, who was the last to speak, to say the fitting thing. His tribute must be

given, partly because Buster is an old friend, and partly because, better than all the others combined, it gives an idea of just the manner of man Philip Budlong was:

"You blokes has talked it out your own way, an' I've kep' still an' let yer run on. You've said a heap o' good things about Fat, an' they're true, every damned one of 'em. Fat he was hot stuff, they ain't no gettin' back o' that.

"But yer've all made him out jest the same sort as the rest of us, only more so; a little bigger an' a little smarter all along the line. Yer don't none of yer seem ter realize that he belonged ter a diff'rent breed o' cats entirely. I tell yer Fat was *diff'rent.* He warn't like no bum I've ever seen. W'y, ther warn't a blessed day he warn't a-doin' things, an', most of all, a-thinkin' things, as we didn't know nothin' about. He didn't let on t'us about 'em, 'cause he knew he might jest as well talk United States ter Hottentots. An' we wouldn't 'a' known w'ere in hell he was a-steerin' fer ef he had — that's sure.

"I hain't never told yer 'bout that three-legged yaller dawg o' his, — born so, — 'cause it's over me head; I hain't never been able ter make it all out, an' I knew you wouldn't be neither. But I'm a-goin' ter tell it now, an' it'll give yer some new notions 'bout Fat, I'm

a-thinkin'.T here was some myst'ry 'bout it, an' I never really knowed how Fat come ter have that yaller dawg. But anyhow I never seen two pals stick closer'n Fat an' that dawg did. W'y, me 'n' Shuffles we was good pals, but we warn't in it wid them!

"Now w'at name d'yer tink Fat give ter that dawg? He called 'im Willum Shakespeare, after a bloke w'at wrote a book he used always ter be carryin' wid 'im, like the mission-men always carry their Bibles; only Fat didn't make a holy show o' his book, a-stickin' it inter everybody's face, like they do. He mostly used the whole name Willum Shakespeare, long's 'twas, an' it sounded odd ter hear a dawg spoke ter that respectful. Ef he happened ter be a little short o' time (course that warn't often with Fat) he just said Willum or Shakespeare, but he never got so low down's ter say Bill or Shake, like we would ha' done; but as I told yer ter start wid, Fat was *diff'rent.*

"Fat he trained Willum ter all sorts o' tricks; some's was jest nice ter look at, an' some's was good fer somethin', 'specially swipin' t'ings. Best of all, Fat teached Willum ter drink beer, w'at no dawg don't take to nat'ral, an' that I s'pose's becuz he's w'at scholars calls a 'lower order.' Oh — h! but 'twould ha' made the water run out o' yer eyes,

fer laughin', ter see that three-legged Willum Shakespeare on a jag! An' w'en Willum Shakespeare an' Fat was jagged tergether (w'ich didn't happen often, 'cause Fat couldn't often get hold of enough booze ter make 'im wabble on his pins) yer'd a clean bustid wid the laughin', yer would, by the great jumpin' Hooligan! ef yer didn't get a vent fer yer mirth a-rollin' yerself on the floor!

"One day, a man Fat had just struck fer a dime got his eye onter Willum, an' started ter dicker fer 'im. Course he thought he'd get the beast dirt cheap 'cause he was travellin' wid a hobo; an' that shows he didn't savy how queer our sort is — not ter mention that Fat was queerer'n the lot of us. So he begun wid offerin' a quarter, jokin'-like, as ef he didn't really mean ter buy 'im. But Fat he held off, an' the man he got warmed up, an' kep' a-raisin' his figger an' a-raisin' it till he teched fourteen dollars. Then all to once he took obst'nate an' wouldn't go no higher. An' Fat he jest laid his finger t'his nose an' walked away.

"I couldn't never rightly make out w'at Fat would 'a' taken for Willum, or w'ether he'd 'a' sold 'im fer any price. He did say afterwards that ef the man had offered him twenty-five dollars for Willum, he could 'a' had 'im. But that was the biggest kind o'

bluff, I'm thinkin'; fer Fat never set store by nothin', man, woman, nor kid, like he loved that damned yaller, three-legged dawg-thing, as warn't no bute at the, best yer c'n say. An' I hain't a speck o' doubt he'd 'ave passed in his checks fer Willum 'thout stoppin' ter think twice about it, jest like we know my pal, Shuffles, did fer Tommy, his kid.

"The very nex' day after Fat refused the fourteen dollars fer Willum, a cop come around here, w'en Fat was out, an' bagged the dawg 'cause he warn't licensed. Oh, but 'twas worth ten years o' yer life t'hear Fat swear w'en he come in an' found Willum gone! 'Twas jest beautiful! I never seen a finer sample o' work anywheres. I c'n see those curses now jest as they come a-rollin' out o' his mouth, big, fat, juicy ones, an' all red an' black inside w'en they cracked, like watermilyuns! Fat took it fer granted the cop had settled Willum's hash wid a shot-gun; an' he was powerful cut up about it fer a good many days; but he got a deal o' comfort out o' thinkin' Willum had lived a honest hobo's life an' died in a good cause — w'ich is, evadin' the law. An' that again shows how queer Fat was. W'y, I tell yer Fat warn't no more like other bums than that three-legged, yaller Willum Shakespeare o' his was like other dawgs!

"Willum hadn't been gone more'n six months w'en one day, 's me 'n' Fat was a-hellin' roun' Scollay square, we took a quick notion ter go inter one o' the 'Dimes' down there. An' I'll sell out meself fer a fat-man freak termorrer ef the first freak thing we set eyes on warn't three-legged Willum Shakespeare, jest's much alive's ever he was, perched up on a stool wid a big printed card o' lies a-hangin' 'round his neck! Fat an' Willum spotted each other the very same minute, an' I never seen two fool women make a bigger show o' theirselves a-huggin' an' a-kissin' an' a-chatterin' 'fore people than Fat an' Willum did then. An' the crowd all around not knowin' w'at ter make of it, a-takin' Fat fer a loony; an' ef they didn't take Willum fer a loony too, 'twas only 'cause dawgs ain't popperlarly s'posed ter run crazy.

"Fat hung on ter Willum's long's they'd let 'im, but they made sech a hell of a big rumpus tergether they didn't let 'im long. Now, ef Fat was here, boys, he'd sure give me the lie fer sayin' it, an' like's not wipe up the whole floor wid me, as he could do widout no trouble. But jest as true's I'm a-settin' here a-talkin', an' me name's Buster O'Toole, Fat boohooed like a kid over that yaller brute w'en he had ter go away. I seen it an' heard it, an' they warn't no use o' his tryin' ter bluff it off, a-

swearin' all that shine on his cheeks come from the lickin' o' Willum's tongue.

"On the way out somebody yelled t'im, 'Hi there, hobo! W'at d'yer tink o' the three-legged purp? W'at'll yer give me fer 'im?' An' if there warn't the very man's had tried ter buy Willum, a-settin' in the ticket-winder. Then, all in a flash o' lightnin', Fat twigged the whole dirty game the cop an' the showman had put up on him tergether. He stopped short, an' a look come inter his eyes as I never seen there before nor sence, though I've seen Fat rip-tearin' mad often an' often's the time. 'Twas the look o' black murder! By God! boys, ef Fat had had a pistol that minute, he'd 'a' shot that showman off-hand; an' as 'twas, I wouldn't 'a' given more'n the price of a yaller hair out o' Willum's hide fer his life, ef Fat could 'a' got his hands to 'im in his box. He'd 'a' shook the breath out o' 'im, jest like a tarrier does out of a rat. Do yer know that showman, seein' 'im look that a-way, turned whiter'n a parson's necktie, an' quivered like a caged-up canary-bird lookin' inter the eyes of a cat?

"By 'n' by (after 'bout two minutes, I s'pose 'twas, though it seemed near two hours) Fat walked away; an' all the time he hadn't said a word. But the showman was so scared that he left fer other parts that night (I found

that out afterwards), an' took Willum wid 'im, an' I don't blame 'im. 'Twould 'a' scared a Wild West cowboy ter be looked at that a-way. I was that scared meself, fer the horrible look in those eyes o' his, I didn't dare ter speak to 'im nor tech 'im nor do anythin' but jest folly. An' a long folly I had, for he walked the streets fer hours, not even stoppin' ter drink anythin', an' never speakin' a word, an' the look never a-leavin' his eyes! Augh, but 'twas horrible, 'twas that oncanny! By God, boys, Fat walked that night till he dropped fer weakness. An' he went ter sleep jest w'ere he dropped, an' 'twas lucky fer 'im he did, fer ef he couldn't 'a' slep' he'd 'a' gone stark, ravin' mad, God knows, 'fore daylight. From the time he waked up he never said a word 'bout goin' ter the Dime nor w'at happened there, an' as long's he lived he never spoke Willum's name, nor never carried the book no more he named Willum after. W'at he did do wid it I don't know, but I fancy he burned it.

"About dawgs Fat had a notion I never knew no one else ter have, an' he set a heap o' store by it. Fat said as long back as I can remember, before ever he lost Willum, that dawgs had souls jest's much's men, an' went ter the good an' the bad places w'en they died. He said how Willum would *have* ter

go ter heaven, 'cause they couldn't be no place too good fer 'im; an' how he wouldn't 'a' felt too mighty damned sure about which place he'd 'a' gone ter himself, ef 'twarn't that his love fer Willum was bound ter take 'im there too. I never quite gathered w'at he meant by that last, but yer c'n risk a day's hustlin' on it 'at he meant a heap more'n he said, 'cause he always did.

"Willum he must 'a' died long ago. An' ef Fat had the right of it, an' I'm not a-sayin' he didn't ('cause I ain't no scholar like Fat was, nor the Dominie here), he's a hell of a sight better fixed up there wid his Willum than he would be here wid us, fer he cared a heap more fer Willum Shakespeare than he did fer all of us lumped together. Gee! but 'twill be a regular circus fer the people up there w'en he an' Willum spots each other like they did in the Dime!

"But ef that Dime Museum chap should happen ter get inter heaven too, he'd a damned sight better be in hell than ter be a-swellin' round there an' run amuck o' Fat some day on the promenaid. But I guess they ain't no great danger o' the Dime Museum chap, nor none of us here neither, fer the matter o' that, a-gettin' inter heaven, 'thout we all get three-legged yaller dawgs, born so, ter work us in; an' three-legged yaller dawgs,

born so, don't seem ter be plenty here round Billy's."

Buster ceased and — silence fell. They had all loved poor Fat, each after his own manly, uncouth fashion, and Buster's closing references to eternal destinies (quaintly, almost flippantly as they were worded) had affected them tremendously. Their minds were awed almost beyond the power of thought, and their hearts were full to overflowing. For more than ten minutes the mourners smoked and chewed and spat, and spat and smoked and chewed, without a word of comment. Then, one by one, they slunk sheepishly to bed.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

GAWK SIMPSON is a hobo. He got his name Gawk from appearing only half-witted at times. How he got his name Simpson, nobody knows, not even himself. He has been an epileptic for a great many years, and it is probably to the "confusion of mind" that often, in this disease, obtains for several hours before the seizure, that his reputation of being half-witted is to be attributed; for his normal wit is far from being of an inferior quality.

Gawk remembers neither father nor mother, and no home but the street and the lodging-house. If he ever did a day's work it was so early in his life that all record of the fact has been lost. True, epilepsy is considered more than an average excuse for idleness in almost any grade of society. But Gawk is above resorting to subterfuge in this matter. He would as soon think of asserting that he drank "for his stomach's sake." He would not work if he could, and (unprofessionally) he does

not hesitate to say so. "No, I ain't a-learnin' no new tricks at my age" (Gawk may be fifty), he invariably responds, when he is seriously remonstrated with for his way of life; "them as wants to slave their lives away jest for the sake o' livin' in half a dozen rooms with a pieanner an' picters an' flowerpots an' winder curtins, an' of wearin' patent leather shoes at one end an' a plug hat at th' other, is welcome to; but that ain't no life for me. I'd rather be called a hobo, an' be a hobo, an' live jest as I've always lived. The other thing looks fair an' fine enough, I'll allow, but so does rottin eggs an' so does assenic, they tell me. Looks is deceitful."

In a word, Gawk is a genuine hobo, honestly proud of his profession, as genuine hoboes usually are. Judged by the standards of that profession, Gawk's orbit is circumscribed. Unlike the majority of his ilk, he makes no *villégiature* in the summer and no southern pilgrimages in the winter. He eschews even the suburbs, for he is as veritable a Cockney as the real (very real) Dr. Johnson and the fictitious Major Pendennis. Hoboes may come and hoboes may go; Gawk stays on forever.

"The city's good enough for me," he says; "what ud I be hobblin' roun' the country for, when I can stay right here an' save cobblers'

bills. Besides, country air I ain't used to, an' it might not agree with a delicut'ly constitooted individooal like me. Booze's as plenty here as anywhere, an' as good for your money; an' here I'm a-goin' to stay."

For all that, he is, in his way, within the rather cramped sphere he allots himself, very much of a vagabond. He can never foretell one night just where he may be living the next: partly because he can never foretell how much money he will have in his pocket (whether, indeed, he will have any at all), but more because his erratic temperament finds its account in the change of scene, companionship, and accommodation that is a corollary of uncertainty of income.

In the hot weather he is apt to make shift with a settee, an empty wagon, a disused box, a soft patch of greensward, a bale of hay, or a heap of grain somewhere about the city flats, parks, freight-yards and wharves, and other scantily-built or night-deserted areas. In cold weather he chooses now one of the several missions that provides a lodging (not always a bed) for a nickel, or for nothing if a good impression is made and the nickel does not happen to be handy; now the Davis Street Home, for which he has received an order, in lieu of mischievous money, from some substantial burgher of evangelistic trend who

thinks to have met by this master-stroke of benevolence all requirements of law and of gospel; now that one of the many ten and fifteen cent lodging-houses to which he happens to be nearest when bedtime comes. The twenty-five cent lodging-houses and the cheap hotels know him not. He holds them both in a fine contempt, and, no matter how flush he may be, he never spends more than fifteen cents for a bed. His surplus, which is, at times, considerable, even after such food as his system demands is paid for, is religiously devoted to beer, whiskey, snuff, tobacco, and female society.

Gawk has two accomplishments peculiarly his own, — fits and religious exhortation; and these accomplishments he prostitutes to business ends on the slightest provocation.

He wisely feigns at opportune moments the disease which really afflicts him at inopportune ones. The sudden fall, the deathly pallor, the loss of consciousness, the uncanny cry, and the convulsion, — all the epileptic acts, — he knows and portrays to perfection. With an eye to the gallery he even adds a bit of stage business; namely, frothing at the mouth by means of a morsel of soap concealed under the tongue — a beggar's device centuries old; as old, perhaps, as beggardom itself. This his facility with the falling-sickness has

proved particularly serviceable to him at the Wayfarer's Lodge on the occasions when he has been forced to take refuge therein. A well-timed fit has delivered him in every instance from both the compulsory work and the compulsory bath. From its atmosphere of gloom and unsociability, however, nothing, not even fits, can deliver him; and that fact has been enough of itself to keep him elsewhere, except in dire emergencies.

Gawk's happy turn at repentance and exhortation stands him in good stead at all the missions. With the provident economy of the expert he expends no unnecessary energy thereon, his trained judgment enabling him to counterfeit so much (and only so much) religious fervor as may be necessary to ensure him the best of treatment in a given case. The hypocrisy involved in this proceeding does not trouble Gawk's conscience in the least. Indeed, it is so purely a matter of business with him that it may not be hypocrisy at all. Surely it is not more so than the transparent machinations of a drummer or the professional condolence of a priest.

The most salient trait of Gawk's character, after the aversion to work and love of drink which he shares with hoboes in general, is his love of children; and this is the only thing that ever sets him yearning for a

regular and respectable life. "I don't say as I wouldn't like to have a handful o' purty kids about me," he often says in the negative, non-committal way that means so much; and then, as if ashamed of himself for having made so dangerous an admission, he always adds: "After all, 'twouldn't be so very much different to what 'tis now, for they's plenty o' kids on the street, an' they do take to me wonderful, like as if I was their own pop."

And it is true that Gawk makes friends with children, in the parks, on the street, in the Public Garden, on the Common, wherever he and they chance to come together. Curiously enough, too, this relation of Gawk's with the children is so holy a thing in his sight that he has never been known to make business capital of it. He gladdens the children with little presents; but, however great their importunity, he never shares their goodies or their pennies lest he have so much as the semblance of interested behavior. Nor does he, as it would be so natural to do, allow himself to accept favors from the mothers or the nurses he wins over to himself by his kindness to the little ones; the nicety of his integrity on this one subject having been filed down to the fraction of a hair.

"At least, no merchant traffics in his heart."

No matter how drunk he may be, Gawk can be trusted with a child. He has slept off many a drunken debauch in a doorway, carefully sheltering some ragged little *protégé* from the cold or the heat, as the case might be. And, somehow (thanks to that marvellous instinct for discerning their real lovers — rare in adults — which children share with most of the higher animals), the children all love Gawk at first sight and trust him implicitly, in spite of his being to the casual eye a most unprepossessing figure, — a ragged, unwashed, lean, rickety, hollow-eyed, yellow-skinned creature, a very spectre of a man. Only one child in all Gawk's experience with children has been known to resent his advances, and that one turned out to be blind.

It is a by no means uncommon thing for Gawk to be convoying a lost child to a police station. As he passes through the street, at one of these times, talking like a mother to some tiny bundle close snuggled in his arms, the street crowd never fails to turn and stare — to wonder, first, at the strangeness of the sight and then to smile over the sweetness of it.

One of Gawk's foundlings came near costing him his life.

The eleven o'clock closing law had forced

him from the saloon where he had passed the evening, drinking. Long before he had left the saloon, he had had the premonitory symptoms of a fit, and, for that reason, as well as because of the cold, which was intense, he was hurrying (so far as it was in his nature to hurry) to one of his night-refuges. At the corner of N—— Street he almost stumbled over a slip of a girl, thinly clad, who was crying and sobbing as if her little heart would break. He gathered the suffering waif in his arms and consoled her in his inimitable way, calling her his Betty. (All Gawk's girls were Betties and all his boys were Jacks.) Gawk considered: There was no policeman in sight. It was unlucky, under the circumstances. Never mind! The foundling must be taken to the station, and, fit or no fit, he must take her there. But first she must be protected against the cold or she might freeze on the way.

So he sat down on the nearest door-step, took off his shoes and stockings, pulled the stockings well up on the girl's little blue legs, chafing the legs as he did so, tied his old felt hat down over her head and ears, and wrapped her snugly in his coat. This done. and his shoes replaced on his stockingless feet, he lifted her in his arms and started for the station.

The hour was so late that the streets were nearly deserted. Had they been full Gawk would not have known it, he was so occupied with crooning to his "wee baby Betty" in a half-witted fashion that proclaimed his precarious condition.

The epileptic seizure came just as he entered a side street only a few rods from the station. He hit his head against the curbing as he fell, and it was full two hours before he was discovered. The little girl was not injured by the fall; and, thanks to the double shelter of Gawk's body and the clothes he had wrapped around her, she did not suffer much from the cold.

Gawk's wound and exposure made it necessary to transfer him to a hospital. It was many weeks before he left it, and at one time it looked as though he would not leave it at all except in a box.

His delirium was a grotesque blending of tender baby talk and highly dramatic religious exhortation. When the delirium was gone, kind, respectable women who had been told of his deed tried to reform him. Gawk was honestly grateful for their interest in him, and, being a gentleman by nature, if not by education, he was invariably courteous to them. Nevertheless, he had no notion of being reformed, and as plainly as he could,

without hurting their feelings too much, he told them so.

He went back to his career of bumming and bringing in the waifs; and with these two he is content.

Hoboes have been proscribed as enemies of the community by the most intelligent of the social reformers. The social reformers are undoubtedly right.

Well?

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